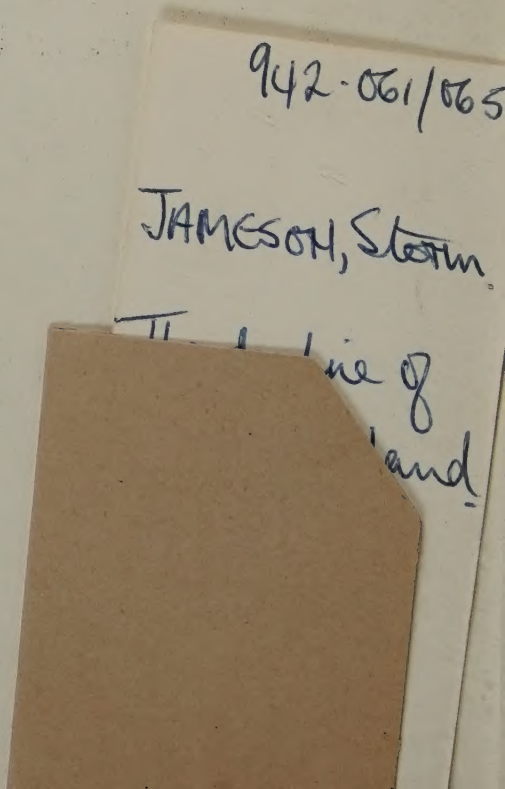
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THE DECLINE OF MERRY ENGLAND

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The Decline of Merry England

BY

STORM JAMESON

Though for no other cause, yet for this: that posterity may know we have not loosely through silence permitted things to pass away as in a dream. . . .

HOOKER, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, I. i.

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FOR

GUY CHAPMAN

BUT FOR WHOM THIS BOOK COULD
NOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN

PREFACE

In this essay on Puritanism, I have not attempted a consecutive history, trusting that those who may read it have a knowledge of the most conspicuous events of the Civil War. To have done so would have been to mask my theme.

I do not pretend that before the Puritan revolution England was enjoying a kind of Golden Age, nor do I defend the many abuses of power and prerogative in those days. My object has been to show that during the second half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries, the government of England had always before it an ideal, which, however badly it may have been fulfilled, was at least truer and nobler than that which superseded it with the advent of the middle classes as a result of the Civil War. To the Puritan ideal many of the ills of modern society are to be directly traced.

No writer who attempts this theme can afford to neglect the guidance of Professor R. H. Tawney. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* is one of the few great books of this century. In its sanity and its passion, in its grip of facts, in its abounding wit and its magnificent prose, it is, I believe, one of the landmarks in the social philosophy of this age. To it, I owe in part the inception of my own study; and if I have in one direction followed closely to Professor Tawney's views, it is due to the persuasiveness and force of his argument.

I would also like to acknowledge the scholarly help of

my husband, who has sped this book by continuous suggestion and counsel, and who has wasted many laborious hours in pursuit of facts and quotations. But for his patient assistance and wide historical knowledge, this book would not have been written.

If I have included too many seeming irrelevancies, I have done so because I believe that more may be revealed by the unpremeditated gestures and exclamations of history than by the advertised fundamental doctrines of parties. Besides, like Professor Saintsbury, I have a tenderness for irrelevancy.

Following Oliver Goldsmith's alleged quotation from Grotius, appended to *Mother Goose's Melody* (" It is a mean and scandalous practice in authors to put notes to things that deserve no notice."), I have thrown my table of references into an appendix at the end.

My grateful thanks are due to Professor Tawney for permission to quote passages from *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, and to make use of several of his notes; to Mr Bertram Dobell for the long excerpt from Traherne's *Centuries of Meditation*; to Messrs Longmans, Green & Co. for allowing me to quote from the late Professor S. R. Gardiner's *History of the Great Civil War*, 1642–1649, and his *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, 1649–1660; to Professor H. J. C. Grierson for leave to make use of information contained in his *Cross Currents in English Literature during the Seventeenth Century*; and to Messrs Constable & Co. for permission to quote from Mr Logan Pearsall Smith's *Words and Idioms*.

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The Decline of Merry England

CHAPTER ONE

It is the fashion of the modern historian to sneer at the phrase "Merry England." "It never existed," they say. "How could it? Look at this. And that. Or over yonder," pointing to some grisly feature, a burning, a disembowelling, or a less dramatic but equally flagrant catastrophe. "Come, smell this," they say, shoving a bunch of rank injustices under one's nose. "Merry England, forsooth!" and they pass on, whistling—a little flat—a tune by Sullivan or German.

If one only had the nerve to pluck these learned iconoclasts by the gown, and to say: "Quite so; but stay a little, good sir. The facts you have presented to me are tainted. They are impregnated with your own twentieth century humanitarianism. An Elizabethan did not look at the wheel and the cart, the ambuscaded highway, the stinking kennel with your eye, with the sentimentality for the human body and the human mind, which you affect. In two centuries, maybe, you yourself will be no better to the occupier of your place than a gross barbarian, the spawn of the industrial age, with your shattering engines, your blackened cities, your malodorous roadways, your speed and your din, with your grotesque wars, your more grotesque peace, your absurd cylindrical clothing. (Trousers, as a luckless poet discovered nineteen centuries ago, are the mark of the barbarian.) You may, in truth,

possess what you call the historical eye, the ability to perceive facts, incidents, trends and circumstances, unapparent to the eyes of the actor, twined up in them and buffeted to and fro; but can you transport your mind two, three or four centuries, see with that actor's eye, or think with his brain? No. Instead, your mind flies to the airs of Sir Edward German, to peasant-thrown pottery, cottage industries and a dozen other faint reincarnations of those days. You see the sign-board, 'Ye Olde Whatte-Notte'; and you murmur, forgetting the past, 'Merry England! Bah!'"

The historian has dismissed merry England into the dismal limbo, where, amid a number of other broken legends, lie Homer and the Isles of the Hesperides: and it behoves us, first of all, to draw it from the darkness and to examine the poor thing, to see if it does, in fact, deserve the historian's easy condemnation.

First, it must be admitted that the phrase 'Merry England' is legendary, or, rather, of notable antiquity. Its condemnation is based on a misapprehension of the meaning of the word 'merry' in this particular conjunction. To the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is almost the equivalent of the word 'happy.' It stands side by side with 'The Merry Peasant,' that ineffable piano exercise; and conjures up a romantic vision of neatherds and shepherdesses, dancing on a lawn, to the notes of the pipe and tabor. It is a pleasant dream; but not so have countries been merry.

The word 'merry' is catalogued in the great Oxford dictionary under many shades of meaning; but in this particular connotation it is translated as 'pleasant,' 'delightful,' poor thin transformations of a word that stands on its own two legs, and, what is worse, truly inept

to the examples given. The first is dated 1436, and it is "the crown of mery Yngland"; the second comes from *The Faerie Queene*; it runs, "Saint George of merry England, the signe of victoree." Pleasant? Delightful? Are these the qualifications aimed at by Spenser when he wrote that warrior sentiment? Surely not. The word here represents a state or condition the exact meaning of which cannot be enclosed in a single word. If an equivalent must be found, perhaps 'high-hearted' might do. In the Old Testament some such state is often clearly indicated. Joseph drinks and is merry with his brethren. The Philistines are merry in their cups, when they send for the blind Samson. "A merry heart," says Solomon, "doeth good like a medicine." If Spenser's phrase is considered in relation to the time when it was written, it cannot but have some such meaning.

Spenser brought it to London in the year 1589, and it is here, or hereabouts, that England might truly be epitomized as merry.

Consider England at this time. For a century now she had had a strong dynasty on the throne, a dynasty which, whatever the public and private morals of its representatives, possessed a most unroyal faculty for ruling. The great barons had been brought to heel. The Act in Restraint of Appeals, 1533, had freed England from interference from beyond its borders. The monasteries had been dispossessed. The country after centuries of internecine and foreign warfare had been welded into a whole. Twenty years earlier the relics of a bygone age had attempted a revival. The Rebellion of the Northern Earls had been blown out like an anachronistic rush-dip, and its leader, the Duke of Norfolk, had paid with his head for his ill-timed experiment.

The last hundred years, too, had seen the face of the world changed. The discovery of America and its potentialities had reorientated Europe, its politics and its economics. What had before been a semi-barbarous island insecurely hung on the edge of the map, had by the enterprise of seamen adventurers been transported to its centre. The new world lay open for England's taking, its fruits, its minerals, its wealth. Only to the south, Spain, a country old in experience, backed by the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy, and thrust nearer than its slender rival towards the southern gold-bearing regions, stood in England's path. But the year in which Spenser brought his three cantos to London was the year that succeeded the first coming-to-terms with the southern enemy. The great Armada had been shattered, its ships harried and sunk, its crews and men-at-arms cast drowned up and down the island coasts. At last, England had some inkling of her strength, the power drawn from a well-knit body and young muscle. A new Atalanta, she had become conscious of her ability to outrun this powerful but ageing veteran. This consciousness, this pride of strength was what made England merry: not merry in the sense of pleasant, but a fierce joy, a merriness as of Samson when he bore away the gates from Gaza. Despite all his jeremiads and invectives against the Englishmen of his day, the good Canon of Windsor, William Harrison, abounds in this merriment. In his *Description of England*, published a year before the Armada sailed, there swells up again and again the ground bass of a happy pride, almost a vaunting of this cockerel country. "The English," remarked a Venetian ambassador in the fifteenth century, "are great lovers of themselves and of everything belonging to them; they think there are no other men like

themselves, and no other world but England; and whensoever they see a handsome foreigner, they say that he looks like an Englishman and that it is a great pity that he should not be an Englishman." (1) Vastly proud, almost sure of itself, untroubled seriously as yet by Calvinist mystics, with the ripples of Renaissance culture just bearing its treasures to these shores, secure in its monarch, secure in its strength, what else could England be but merry? This is the state, this the condition which brought the phrase to Spenser's pen.

> " Then our age was in its prime . . .
> A very merry, dancing, drinking,
> Laughing, quaffing and unthinking
> Time."

Yet, perhaps, the idea of England as a pleasant land was not wholly wrong. Hints of it are given again and again by foreign travellers. " Les Angloys," wrote Perlin in 1558, " les uns avec les autres, sont joyeux et ayment fort la musique; car ne scauroit estre si petite eglise, en laquelle on ne chante de musique." Dr Lemmius in 1560 testifies to " the incredible curtesie and frendliness of speache and affability in this famous realme." " The women are charming," declared Kiechel in 1585, " and by nature, so mighty pretty, as I have scarcely ever beheld. . . . When a foreigner or an inhabitant goes to a citizen's house on business, or is invited as a guest, and having entered therein, he is received by the master of the house, the lady or the daughter, and by them welcomed . . . he has even the right to take them by the arm and to kiss them, which is the custom of the country; and if anyone does not do so, it is regarded and reputed as ignorance and ill-breeding on his part."

Though charming customs do not of necessity imply a contented people, they are feathers in the wind. Even the wild north from Yorkshire to the Border was becoming tamer. The raids across the Debatable Lands had been checked, and, in another decade, would die out altogether. In the midlands and south—the terror of invasion lifted, the new church established—the people sang at their work. " I have heard no music for one whole year," says the wanderer in *Ralph Roister Doister*, as he reaches home. Through every indictment of the times, its hardships, its habits and its morals, there breathes the spirit of a happy, confident people, strong in traditions which are not yet broken, and in beliefs which are not yet thrust out.

All ages are ages of transition, but this one changes more rapidly than most. The Middle Ages had come to their appointed climax in a strong central government. Under the curious patriarchal tyranny of the Tudors a new estate was growing to power, the bourgeoisie. The towns, more perceptive and with better opportunities than the countryside, had been learning from the world's counting house, the Low Countries, the trick of money-making, and with it that peremptory anger against a still politically strong episcopate, which, quasi-mediæval in outlook, was resisting the cupidinous spirit of this swelling class, and attempting to use its pastoral and judicial authority in the defence of the labourer and the needy. The countryside, on the other hand, was still mediæval in outlook, a land largely of village communities, self-contained and self-sufficing. It is in the waxing of the former and the decline of the latter that the seeds of the Puritan revolution were nourished.

The noun ' puritan ' has survived in our vocabulary, although its meaning to-day is very different from its meaning in the times when it was coined. To-day it

carries a certain negative quality, the implication of disapproval, bigotry and shamefastness. The Puritan of the seventeenth century was one who was pure in the matter of religious belief and exercise. The same adjective was, by the way, applied to the more thorough-paced adherents of the doctrines of the Mountain in the French Revolution, and is, I believe, attached to-day to those Bolsheviks who are thick-and-thin disciples of Stalin. The seventeenth century Puritan traced his descent through several branches back to Calvin. Whether he was a Presbyterian or an Independent was rather a matter of religious polity than of character; both parties bore the caste mark of their progenitor. It was natural that Puritanism should have fixed itself chiefly among the commercial and smaller propertied classes, since it was from the commercial centre of Geneva that it sprang, and the doctrines of Calvin found a more grateful soil in an industrial bourgeoisie than in a pastoral society of landowners and agricultural labourers.

Calvinism fostered two general principles. The first, that every form of worship which is not sanctioned by the word of God as set forth in the Bible, is impure. By this it formally proclaimed itself the adversary of the Pope and the traditions on which the whole Roman hierarchy was founded. The second, and more general precept, was that every form of human activity should be directed to one single end, the self-perfection of man, whereby he purges himself of sin and may win Paradise. This theory, embracing the whole of man's social and spiritual life, contemned every form of activity not directed to this specific end and not directed to the discipline of mind and body. In one sweeping sentence, it condemned not only what it described as carnal sins, dancing, secular music,

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the theatre, but also all speculation, all curiosity which might crack the perfected world it had imagined. It left industry as the one outlet for man's natural energies. It did not foresee what the result would be. Fostering as it did, a belief in efficiency, efficiency became in time the object of man's aspirations. The spiritual touchstone of self-perfection became overgrown and in its place was put up that of worldly success. In its very virtues lay hidden the germs of defeat.

The English Puritan was born of the fusion of two forces, religious and economic, of the families of fear and greed. Fear of Rome and of the hostility of a robbed and discarded overlord made of the rebel an active protestant, over-protestant in his anxiety. The Discoveries and the consequent shifting of England from the edge to the centre of the world quickened his acquisitive instincts. The attempt of the Crown to contain and control these two forces resulted in the explosion known as the Civil War. That the Puritan revolution was the spontaneous rising of virtuous subjects against a reckless Papistical tyranny is one of those ancient myths which, though it is as much thin air as the Divine Right of Kings, is still drummed into the heads of children by schoolmasters from the textbooks of last century. (It says much for the clear-headedness of children that they usually prefer the romantic Charles to the somewhat dingy Cromwell without attempting to weigh their respective religious and political tenets.) The Civil War was rooted in causes far more natural, and, one may add, far more dangerous. It was the result of the impact of two ideas. The theory of society as one indivisible whole, of which the government, personified in the King, the Church, and the Council, attempting by personal interference to regulate the whole commerce of

classes in the commonweal, and alive to the duties of each subject towards his neighbour, met and was broken on the theory of man as an individual owning rights and owing duties no whit less severe, but claiming as his final court of appeal, not the King, not the Church, but his own conscience in the eyes of God. The second theory won in a few years by luck and the discovery of a military genius: but at that particular date it was in any circumstances irresistible, whether paternal government had capitulated or not. Perhaps, had it capitulated, the results for England might not have been so disastrous. There is no better maker of wildernesses than your thorough-paced, make-straight-the-way, religious fanatic, of whatever persuasion he may be, Puritan, Marxist, or Fascist. The idealist is a far more reckless destroyer than the opportunist. The long period of royal control and resistance to the growing forces made the explosion, when it came, all the fiercer. When he had conquered, the Puritan reacted with all the exasperation and ferocity of a badly frightened man, assisted by the disciplined wilfulness of the most liberal of doctrinaires. In the passion of their zeal, the Puritans hauled down and broke all that the Church of England, as imagined by the bishops from the days of Cranmer and Latimer, stood for; decency, reverence, beauty. Cromwell let his vilest rabble loose to deface Peterborough Cathedral. Fairfax's troopers hacked and threw down the altar of the " malignant cathedral " of Canterbury, " so eminent," says Erasmus, " that it puts Religion into a man's thoughts as far as he can see it." The windows of Winchester stand to this day a reproach against fanatics. They killed Laud and banished Cosin, and in their places raised such as the frantic Cheynell, the beastly Culmer and the sadistic Peters. For fifteen

years, the Puritan tried to make over old England on his own plan. The city conquered the country. The merchant and the manufacturer in the name of religion killed religion. By brutal dragooning, by muzzling criticism, they changed the life of the country. And they changed it so thoroughly in those years, that, when the Restoration came, none had the skill to retransform it. The old rural life was dying; the country customs were banished. Dancing, profane singing, wakes, revels, wrestlings, shootings, leaping, ringing of bells, church-ales, may-poles, all the insignia of the dead era were thrown out with its body upon the rubbish heap. Cathedrals no longer echoed to the voices of the choir and the sound of the organ. They were left derelict to fall to pieces as the monasteries before them. Adjudged rogue, vagabond, and sturdy beggar, the itinerant fiddler no longer stumped the country, but made way for the condemned highwayman's last confession. The singing-men and the musicians were scattered, and English music was dead. All traditions had been shattered, and spiritual authority was killed outright.

The breaking of the Anglican tradition is the intangible, but, in effect, equally terrible counterpart of Cromwell's massacre at Drogheda: for it destroyed the one moral force strong enough to combat the inevitable effects of a gospel of efficiency. At least half the Puritan animosity against the Church of England was directed against the 'filthy Canon Law,' which the Courts of Star Chamber exercised to the discomfiture of the profiteer and engrosser. The first refusal of the Presbyterians, and the later stronger negative of the Independents to the suggestion to set up the equivalent of the Scots presbyteries, are fundamentally characteristic of the new men. The

Puritan ministry was to be dependent on the political government; and, when the Restoration came, Puritanism was still strong enough to see to it that the voice of the Church should never be heard again upon the ethics of business. The divorce of religion from life was accomplished. In spite of the hubbub over toleration raised in the reigns of Charles II and James II, religious enthusiasm was a spent force, an empty noise, which dwindled into silence with the coming of William of Orange.

Men's minds were turning to other, more exciting enterprises in the expansion of trade. But, though the force of Puritan religion had waned, it still lived, a faded but potent spirit to silence disturbing questions and to drive labourers to work. It was not toleration which had come in with the Great Revolution, but indifference. The value of our freedom from superstition was pointed out by an acute parliamentarian in 1715; it enabled us to take advantage of having fifty less holy days in the year than had France, each of which cost that deluded nation some hundred and twenty thousand pounds. (2) In recompense for such services, Puritanism achieved a free hand in the reformation of the people. The repressive legislation, which has culminated in some of the more grotesque provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Acts and the Defence of the Realm Acts, under which we exist but flourish not, start with the Puritan's ordinances against actors and other vagrants and pass through such measures as Walpole's Playhouse Act of 1738 and such revenue-finding measures as the Gin Act of 1743, an Act which Lord Chesterfield described as being against both justice and compassion.

Some forty years after the Gin Act, a Presbyterian Lord Chief Justice is to be found defending the savageries of

the penal code, the public dissection of the bodies of criminals after execution, and the burning of women found guilty of coining; " the spectacle," Lord Loughborough said, " is likely to make a more lasting impression upon the beholders than mere hanging; and, in fact, no greater degree of personal pain is thus inflicted, the criminal being always strangled before the flames are suffered to approach the body." In another seventy years that ardent Christian and Liberal John Bright is seen opposing the Ten Hours Bill on the grounds of its mock humanity. The Puritan revolution opened the rift between the middle and the working classes. The twentieth century has inherited the diseases of the Puritan virtues. By it the growth of the country, nurtured in the rich soil of the Elizabethan age, was checked and turned. The country grew and flourished but not in the shape for which nature had designed it.

As for the Church of England, when it emerged from the Interregnum, draggled and maimed, it had ceased to be a power for either good or evil in the State. Bereft of its power, dependent upon an assembly of laymen, not necessarily of its own persuasion, and composed largely of those classes over whom it had ridden rough-shod, it was helpless. Imprisoned and shorn, it has walked delicately, so that it too has almost come to believe in the gospel of efficiency. The following extract is from the *Daily Mail* of 14th October, 1929. " Dean Inge strongly deprecated the violent language often used about our industrial civilization. . . . The large majority of business men, he said, lived not by robbing their fellows, but by serving them." The doctrines of Dr Pangloss were not formerly the theme of preachers from the Shrouds of Paul's. " Now what shall we say of the rich citizens of London? . . . Is there not reigning in London as much pride, as much

covetousness, as much cruelty, as much oppression, and as much superstition as was in Nebo? . . . London was never so ill as it is now. In times past men were full of pity, but now there is no pity; for in London, their brother shall die in the street for cold, shall lie sick at the door between stock and stock, I cannot tell what to call it, and shall perish there for hunger; was there ever more unmercifulness in Nebo?" (3) But then Latimer did not claim to be a Liberal Platonist.

The precepts of Puritanism have swayed England for three centuries. At last the doctrines of that individualist philosophy show symptoms of decay. The mediæval ideal of the commonwealth is not so out of date as it was. "For four wicked centuries the world has dreamed this foolish dream of efficiency; but the end is not yet. But the end will come." (4)

CHAPTER TWO

> In small proportions we just beauties see
> And in short measures, life may perfect be.
>
> BEN JONSON, *Pindaric Ode.*

THE light of the Renaissance was slow to fill the English landscape. In the first dim haze of dawn, the figures of More, Holbein, Erasmus, of Wolsey and Colet, and the splendid reckless pageant of the Cloth of Gold, which ruined half the nobility of England, can be glimmeringly discerned passing through the smoke wreaths. Gradually the light grows to broad day. The crowd has swollen; the procession forms, gorgeous fantastic figures of clay and air, Leicester, Essex, Burleigh, Sidney, Drake and the Discoverers, the poets Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Donne, the musicians Dowland, Byrd and Bull, tumbling Tarlton and scholarly Sir Henry Savile; a rout more magnificent than the poet of *The Faerie Queene* ever dreamed. But with the execution of Raleigh there comes a sudden shrinking. In fading light, we see the disgrace and death of Bacon, the wretched end of Jonson. Last, on 10th April, 1640, as the scene-shifters take down Inigo's pillars, balustrades, and sphinx-crowned pedestals for *The Queene of Arragon*, the darkness shoots up. Three days later the Short Parliament met. Renaissance England had passed away.

It is usual to speak in general fashion of the subtlety of the Renaissance mind, and in support, to cite such

particulars as Shakespeare and Donne. It is a debatable point. Is not this subtlety, in fact, not subtlety at all, but very simplicity? a superficial disguise? for the main characteristic of the English people of the day is their immense appetite, their almost vulgar avidity after life in all its forms, their boundless curiosity. It is an age of such rapid transition, when whole new worlds were opening like rose trees in June, appearing more swiftly than rumour could fly, so that the mixture of last week's thought with next week's fancy was never fixed for more than a moment's space. Everything must be tasted, must be tried, from the Iliad to the last French slop, from the crudest alchemy to the civilized Italian cursive hand. The constant change lends to the age that glitter of paradox as impossible to imprison as the lights in a chain of diamonds, and gives to its best minds the cloak of subtlety which they neither pretended to nor did in fact possess.

For it is not only in the brightest stars that these qualities are apparent. The restless appetite is shared by the humblest folk. It displays itself in every shift of life, in every twist of speech. Each year seems to mint a new phrase into the currency of the language. It is not the poets alone who have stocked us with this coinage. The preachers and the scholars made their points with a boldness of flight which no generation of Englishmen has since attained. And the vernacular is of the same order.

The last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign are a kaleidoscopic hurry of events, the casting into the crucible of all the old world and all the new to fuse into—who knew what?

Now for a hundred years, with the exception of half a dozen small revolts and rebellions, quickly crushed,

internal peace had been assured. For the first time, the English people could consider themselves a nation, united under one leader. They had survived the financial collapse of the middle years of the Tudors. The appearance of a new continent beyond their western islands had turned their eyes from the East, from their lost provinces, Normandy, Aquitaine, Gascony and Guienne. The latest cartographers had placed them at the most favourable point from which to snatch the wealth that the discoveries offered. At last opportunity had come to her to assert herself; and she had taken it. Her people had been slow to make anything of the first eastern and western discoveries. Spain and Portugal, the great seafaring nations, had forestalled them. "Out of Spain they have discovered all the Indies and Seas Occidental, and out of Portingall, all the Indies and Seas Oriental: so that by this part of the Orient and Occident, they have compassed the world. For the one of them departing towards the Orient, and the other towards the Occident, met again in the course or way of the middest of the day, and so then was discovered a great part of the same seas and coasts by the Spaniards."(1) Spain was the enemy, had been so for thirty years. With her foreign empire, dominating the West Indies, holding the routes to Italy, Turkey and the Levant, and sprawling over the Low Countries, Spain had what appeared to be a stranglehold on the vital English export trade in cloth and wool. But at last the Armada had sailed, had been met in the open, and by luck, by strategy and by wild courage, had been broken and scattered. It was the visible sign of the greatness of the people. It needed no more to set the blood dancing.

In the year after the Armada, England was still a country of forward and backward regions. The north

from York to the Scots border was sparsely populated. The march counties with their three wardenries still existed in the lively fear of a sudden downrush of reivers who might gather secretly in the mists of Liddisdale or on Teviot Water, pour through the glens, burn and harry and retreat again as swiftly as they had come, driving before them the cattle and leaving in their track smoking farmsteads and dead and wounded bodies. The raids were growing rare, but the terror still hung over the northern dales: and so for the most part, the inhabitants clung to the walled cities and their neighbourhood, Carlisle, Berwick, Alnwick, Newcastle, down to Skipton and York. Only a few sheep and cattle grazed on the upland fells.

The south and east was the seat of modern England, the thriving counties of industry, the centres of the great wool trade, Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester, and the great cathedral cities of Lincoln, Peterborough and Canterbury; of the harbours of the fishing trade, Lynn, Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Aldborough, Harwich, Colchester, Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs; of the Cinque Portes, Sandwich, Deal, Dover, Rye and Winchelsea, the great shipyards where the Queen's men-of-war were built, besides the carracks, caravels, hoys, barges and crares of lesser folk, merchant adventurers and privateers. "I can assure your Lordship," writes the unhappy Spanish agent in England in 1586, "that it is impossible to give notice of the equipping of ships here for the purpose of going out to await the arrival of the Indian flotillas, because so great is the movement of armed ships in England that no notice whatever is taken of them, and it is only necessary to tell the shipmasters to be at a certain port on such a day for them to go without even their knowing each other's

movements. Some of the Queen's best ships are sent thither too, on a pretext of cruising along the coast as they usually do, and thus, without anything being heard of it, twenty or thirty fully armed ships can be sent out to await the (Spanish) flotillas." (2)

The ships are coming and going the length of the coast round from Bristol to London, where lie up the merchants' shipping and the prizes wrung from the enemy, down below Wapping. Above lies the city, the seat of government and of commerce, the proudest and most unruly people in the kingdom.

In the west and midlands lay the older England of the rural communities, the counties where agriculture still gave man his existence and his livelihood, expanses of river valleys or wolds, tufted with forests and chequered over with plantations and villages. The towns here are rarer and for the most part are cathedral cities of the large dioceses, Salisbury, Exeter, Wells, Worcester and Gloucester. And the great university city of Oxford, so

> " . . . richly seated near the river-side
> The mountains full of fat and fallow deer,
> The battling pastures lade with kine and flocks,
> The town gorgeous with high-built colleges,
> The scholars seemly in their grave attire." (3)

Bounded by the Chilterns and the Severn, by Trent and the Channel, this is the centre of England. It is still the last stronghold of England, with blood flowing in veins which we name Coln, Windrush, Avon and Evenlode, Itchen and Test, a region which in the twentieth century holds to habit and custom that were habit and custom before Friar Bacon discovered gunpowder.

Yet even here the age of transition was upon the people,

transition so swiftly flowing that men could see the face of England changing as clearly as a man sees the face of Solway change under the flood tide. And as all men recall through the tint of years the sweet things of their youth, there were as many to mourn the vanished past as to welcome the approaching future.

The great tracts of land freed from the Church's hands by the dissolution of the monasteries had passed into secular possession. The new estates thus created had brought into being a new landholding class. Before the dissolution, agriculture had been a means of subsistence only: now it had become a trade. A yeoman class was growing up, farmers holding their hundred acres or more, in place of the peasant scratching a bare existence from some thirty and dependent on the village community. But communal farming had not yet died; and all over this centre of England stood small hamlets cut off from the outside world, whose inhabitants were interested no further than to wring from the soil the means of filling their stomachs and clothing their bodies, working together to fend off their worst enemy, famine.

The village would stand in a river valley, a huddle of houses of wood frames and plaster, washed red, blue or white according to the local clay. Down by the stream lay the common pasturage, the richest hay land. At Candlemas these pastures would be fenced off into strips, and the strips drawn for by lot. Each lot would become the property of one individual until hay-making time. When the hay had been cut, the fields would return to common occupation, and the best of the village stock be put to graze on it.

Beyond the common pastures lay the arable lands, sown with wheat for the manchet, rye for the cheaper bread,

the nut-brown loaf, the victuals of the crews which broke the Armada, barley and hops for the brewage, vetch, beans and peas. Behind the tillage stretched the upland grazing, specky with little black cattle and sheep. The sheep were one of the symbols of the new age. The immense profits in wool had caused many landlords to let go fallow land which in earlier times would have been under cultivation. It was said that where sixty years ago six ploughs had cut their furrow, to-day there worked but one. The 'silly' sheep was the countryman's curse; and he had his rhyme about it:—

"Sheep have eat up our meadows and our downs,
Our corn, our woods, whole villages and towns.
Yea, they have eat up many wealthy men,
Besides widows and orphan children;
Besides our statutes and our iron laws,
Which they swallowed down into their maws;
Till now I thought the proverb did but jest,
Which said a black sheep was a biting beast."

Behind the rough pastures lay the wild country of moor and brake, unpathed from the edge of cultivation, peopled only by the famous little black conies, rare foxes, badgers and roe-deer.

The village itself would be no better than a huddle of buildings, put up higgledy-piggledy, wherever the happy builder fancied. Few were of stone or brick. The older houses of wood and plaster were roofed with straw, sedge or moss: but the new and better were of oak, a custom deplored by Harrison in his *Description*, both for the growing scarcity of timber, and the effect of this luxury upon the character of the inhabitants. "In times past, men were contented to dwell in houses, builded of sallow,

willow, plum-tree, hardbeam (hornbeam), and elm, so that the use of oak was in a manner dedicated wholly unto churches, religious houses, princes' palaces, noblemen's lodgings: but now all these are rejected, and nothing but oak any whit regarded. And yet, see the change," he cries, " for when our houses were builded of wood, then had we oaken men, but now that our houses are come to be made of oak, our men are not only become willow, but a great many, through Persian delicacy crept in among us, altogether of straw, which is a sore alteration. . . . Now have we many chimneys, yet our tenderlings complain of rheums, catarrhs and poses. Then had we none but reredosses,[1] and our heads did never ache. For as the smoke in those days was supposed to be a sufficient hardening for the timber of the house, so it was reputed a far better medicine to keep the goodman and his family from the quack or pose, wherewith as then few were acquainted." (4)

Round the houses grew orchards and gardens, such as would be seen nowhere else in Europe, not even in Holland. The habit of growing and eating fruit and vegetables was comparatively new. " Wherein in my time, their use is not only resumed among the poor commons—I mean melons, pompions, gourds, cucumbers, radishes, skirrets, parsnips, carrots, cabbages, turnips and all kinds of salad herbs—but also fed upon a dainty dish at the tables of delicate merchants, gentlemen and nobility, who make their provision yearly for new seeds out of strange countries." (5) Of orchards, Harrison says, " We have the most delicate apples, plums, pears, walnuts, filberts, etc. . . . so have we no less store of strange fruit, as apricots, almonds, peaches, figs, cornels. . . . I have

[1] Sussex irons.

seen capers, oranges and lemons, and head of wild olives growing here. . . . Whereby I am persuaded that albeit the gardens of *Hesperides* were in times past so greatly accounted of, because of their delicacy: yet if it were possible to have such an equal judge, as by certain knowledge of both were able to pronounce upon them, I doubt not but he would give the prize unto the gardens of our days, and generally all over Europe, in comparison of these times wherein the old exceeded. Pliny and others speak of a rose that had three score leaves growing upon one button: but if I should tell of one which bare a triple number unto that proportion, I know I shall not be believed. . . . For my own part, good reader, let me boast a little of my garden. . . ." (5)

Rural England was still largely feudal in outlook. Although no longer bound by oath, the peasant still owed a customary fealty to landowner and church. The lord of the manor and the parson dominated the community. The church acquired rights as the centre of the parish. Built of stone in that simple architecture which is its own beauty, the plan probably of no more trained designer than the village mason, it might have stood here for the last half dozen centuries, and been rebuilt of the stones of its predecessor, which, in its turn, may have been wrought of the stones from some mithraeum, the temple of a Roman legion or cohort, brought here from the East, carrying with it the cult of Mithras and other older gods. The church was the meeting place of all the village life, of the busy and the idle, of the news-carrier and the news-seeker, of the new-born, of the lovers, and of the dead. Within, it was very bare, of white stone, unsmutched by sea-coal smoke, and without ornament. When the Church of Rome was driven out, out too went the witnesses to

papal dominion. The stone altar was removed. The images were torn from their niches; and the tabernacles, shrines, roodlofts, and other "monuments of idolatry" cast out. Only the choir stalls still stood, and carried the carvings of some local craftsman genius; a fox with the neck of a goose in his mouth, the carcase thrown over his shoulder; a leash of running hounds; a grinning devil; the head of a bibulous old man. The bells which rang night and morning too survived; and the storied windows were saved, not by any tenderness for their pictures, but "by reason of the extreme charge that should grow by alteration of the same into white panes."

> "Such types e'en yet of virtue be
> And Christ as in a glass we see—
> When with a fishing rod the clerk
> St Peter's draught of fish doth mark.
> Such is the scale, the eye, the fin
> You'd think they strive and leap within;
> But, if the net, which holds them, brake,
> He with his angle some would take." (6)

As for the common folk who toiled and sweated in the fields round the village, they were much what peasants have always been (until the city overspread the country and sent it its mechanical pleasure-makers, charabancs, wireless and shoddy news-sheets); ignorant, gross, credulous, brutal, devout and superstitious: but they had not yet learned to be 'saved,' or worse, genteel. For them the year passed without their needing or desiring to know a mile beyond their parish boundary. The slow revolutions of the months sufficed them. Their year was made up of seasons and festivals and holy days. The seasons dated from before Christ; and the festivals and holy days were

inherited from pagan worship. When Holy Church was busy converting the heathen, she was scrupulous not to break the continuity of the new flock's habits, and allotted to the saints, days on which other rites had been observed before. Midsummer Day had been a day of worship before Zeus was thought of. The great Mithraic festival had been on 25th December. It was therefore more politic to retain the days, and to rename one after St John the Baptist, and to change the other to Christmas.

The year began on Plough Monday,[1] the Monday after Twelfth Night, a holiday when the ploughs were dragged through the streets by a whooping mob; and ale was drunk to the success of the harvest.

The work of the year began anew. The earth stirred and men went out to the fields. After the hay crop had been divided by lot at Candlemas, the air echoed with the cries of the crow-keeper, "no Cupid hoodwinked with a scarf guarding the meadows." February brought in St Valentine's day, and much gross fooling. Then the lambing begins; prayers are offered for smooth weather, for "a fair March is worth a King's ransom." Lent comes round. There is no carnival in England, but on Collop Monday and Shrove Tuesday, the people have their last frolic before "the cruel fasting days."

"Then old and young are both as mad, as guests at Bacchus' feast,
And four days long they tipple square, and feed and never rest. . . .

. . . . .

The Wednesday next, a solemn day, to Church they early go,

[1] The year, of course, by the calendar began on 25th March.

To sponge out all the foolish deeds by them committed so.
They money give and on their heads, the priest doth ashes lay,
And with his holy water washes all their sins away."(7)

At the end of March, the barley will be sown for the brewing of beer, which approving foreigners describe as the colour of old Alsace wine, and will, as the saying is, make a cat speak. At last comes Easter. The Easter festival is older than Christianity, and the games which accompany it go back to a forgotten age. There are the mummers and the Pace-egging play, but no one recognizes in the grotesque death of St George and his resurrection by the comic doctor, the legend of Adonis and the rebirth of spring. There is, too, a church-ale, whereby money is got for the repair of the church. These church-ales were much frowned on by bishops and magistrates, as special cause that " many disorders, contempt of the law, and other enormities are perpetuated to the great profanation of the Lord's Sabbath, the dishonour of Almighty God, increase of bastardy and dissolute life." Yet for all their reproofs, the church-ales continue, for the parson is as much a believer in the old customs as his flock. It is English and rooted in the people. The churchwardens and the parishioners, each according to his ability, provide maybe twenty quarterns of malt which is brewed into strong ale. This huff-cap, " this nectar of life," they broach in the church and sell to all comers. He who can pay for and consume the most, is reckoned the godliest.

May-day, the crown of the year, comes next. On May eve, " all the young men and maids, old men and wives

run gadding over night to the woods, groves, hills and mountains, where they spend all night in pleasant pastimes; and, in the morning they return, bringing with them birch and branches of trees to deck their assemblies withal." As morning comes, " all the wild heads of the parish, consenting together, choose them a Grand Captain of all mischief whom they ennoble with the title ' my lord of Misrule,' and him they crown with great solemnity, and adopt for their king. This king anointed chooseth forth twenty, forty, three-score or a hundred lusty-guts, like to himself, to wait upon his lordly majesty, and to guard his noble person. Then every one of these men he investeth with his liveries of green, yellow, or some other light wanton colour. And as though they were not bawdy —gawdy enough, I should say—they bedeck themselves with scarves, ribbons and laces, hanged all over with gold rings, precious stones and other jewels: this done they tie about their legs 20 or 40 bells with rich handkerchiefs in their hands, and sometimes lay a cross over their shoulders and necks, borrowed for the most part of their pretty Mopsas and loving Bessies, for bussing them in the dark.

" Thus all things set in order, they have their hobby-horses, dragons and other antics, together with their bawdy pipers and thundering drummers to strike up the devil's dance withal. Then march this heathen company towards the church and the churchyard, their pipers piping, their drummers thundering, their stumps dancing, their bells jingling, their handkerchiefs swinging about their heads like madmen, their hobby-horses and other monsters skirmishing among the rout, and in this sort they go to the church. . . . Then after this about the church they go again, and so forth into the churchyard where

they have commonly their summer-halls, their bowers, arbours and banqueting houses set up, where they feast, banquet and dance all day, and peradventure all night too.

" But their chiefest jewel is their may-pole which they bring home with great veneration as thus. They have twenty or forty yoke of oxen, every ox having a sweet nosegay of flowers placed on the tip of his horns; and these oxen draw home this may-pole . . . which is covered all over with flowers and herbs, bound round about with strings from top to bottom, and sometimes painted with variable colours, with two or three hundred men, women and children following it with great devotion. And thus being reared up with handkerchiefs and flags hovering on the top, they strew the ground round about, bind green boughs about it. . . . Then they fall to dance about it." (8)

May was the month for sowing the hemp and flax. Whitsun brought another church-ale, or a wake, the day of the village feast, reprobated by the true Puritan since it permitted the hinds to abstain from " bodily labour two or three days after, peradventure the whole week, spending it in drunkenness, whoredom, gluttony and other filthy Sodomitical exercises." (9)

The sheep-shearing started in June. The wool was baled and despatched by mule pack to the towns in the eastern counties. Here once again was an excuse for festival, a country gathering of folk dancing, eating and drinking. At midsummer, the jollity of May-day was repeated. Bonfires would be lit in the fields; and youths and girls would dance about them, and, leaping the flames, would throw, for luck, sprigs of verbena and bunches of violets among the faggots.

So round to harvest. "As we were returning to our inn," writes a traveller of 1598, "we happened to meet some country people celebrating their harvest home: their last load of corn they crown with flowers, having besides an image richly dressed, by which perhaps they would signify Ceres; this they kept moving about, while men and women, men and maidservants, riding through the streets in a cart, shout as loud as they can till they arrive at the barn." (10)

The turn of the year has come. There is the sowing of the wheat and rye. Day by day winter draws nearer; the days shorten; the labourers return home earlier. By Hallowmas the wheat is all sown. Then the slaughtering of the stock begins, and the salting against the dark months. Winter creeps on. The men have come in from the fields; but there is work for all. There is the continual fashioning of the rude implements of agriculture and of household use. Trenchers, spoons and bowls are carved from beech boles and boughs. The great leathern jacks are bent and riveted. Baskets and fish-seines are plaited from reeds and sedge. Rakes, flails, hayforks, wooden shovels, oxbows, mangers and racks are cut and hardened in the fire. The tinker sits among the women by the fire, hammering for dear life, while the maids weave straw into horse-collars and baskets. Rushes are peeled for dips. Baking and brewing never cease. And all the time there is the brisk whirr of the spinning-wheel.

At last Christmas drives in, and once again there is revelry, when, Puritan Stubbes says, "more mischief is that time committed than in all the year besides. What masking and mumming! whereby robbery, whoredom, murder and what not is committed! what dicing and carding, what eating and drinking, what banqueting and

feasting is then used more than in all the year besides! to the great dishonour of God and impoverishing of the realm." (11) So they keep festivity until Twelfth Night, the night of the Kings; and the year is round.

Such was the life of the Elizabethan peasant, a year of heavy toil and gross mirth. They lived neither well nor lavishly; but, save for two fears, they were for the most part content. They rose early. "It is now the sixth hour, the sweet time of the morning, and the sun at every window calls the sleepers from their beds. The marigold begins to open her leaves, and the dew on the ground doth sweeten the air. The falconers now meet with many a fair flight, and the hare and the hounds have made the huntsman good sport. . . . The forester is now drawing home to his lodge, and if his deer be gone, he may draw after cold scent. . . . Now the mower falls to whetting his scythe, and the beaters of hemp to give a 'ho' to every blow. . . ." (12) Their food was plain; white meat for the better part of the year, bread, cheese, milk, butter and eggs; salt meat during the winter months; fish on Wednesdays, since, with the laudable object of fostering the fishing industry and thereby breeding a reserve of seamen for the navy, the Queen had ordained abstinence from flesh on one day a week in addition to the appointed fast days. Their amusements were rough and coarse, but they were traditional and had been played in England since time was not. They had little or no communication with the outside world. The market town was on the brink of their vision. They knew little of their neighbours; one road at best connected them with the highway; on the other side the tracks ran out at the edge of the pasturage. They were sunk in superstition; cats and hares were the familiars of witches; witch-wolves prowled the fields at

night; and any misfortune of the dark was the trick of Robin Goodfellow, the lob of spirits

> " That fright the maidens of the villagery,
> Skim milk and sometimes labour in the quern
> And sometime make the breathless housewife churn
> And sometimes make the drink to bear no barm;
> Mislead night wanderers, laughing at their harm."

But at the same time they were devout, as devout as the poor wretches who followed Lord Dacre to their deaths on the Pilgrimage of Grace, content to listen to the readings and teachings of their parish priest, so be it he was not a blind Sir Topas or a Sir Oliver Martext. It is from them and their like that Shakespeare drew his bumpkins, Corin and Adam, Perdita's old shepherd, Mr Justice Shallow's Davy, Jack Cade's followers, his gardeners, his gravediggers, his clowns. They dwelt in a country where the simple man might still enjoy his pleasures.

> " See the fishes leap and play
> In a blessed summer's day;
> Or to hear the partridge call
> Till she have her covey all,
> Or to see the subtle fox,
> How the villain plies the box,
> After feeding on his prey
> How he closely sneaks away
> Through the hedge and down the furrow
> Till he gets into his burrow;
> Then the bee to gather honey
> And the little black hair'd coney
> On a bank for sunny place
> With her forefeet wash her face." (13)

That the government regarded them as the salt of the land is borne out by the legislation and administration of the sixteenth century, designed expressly for the purpose of stilling Hodge's fears, and righting his discontents. His fear, his everlasting terror, was starvation. Famine might come by two ways, the hand of nature or the avarice of man. Against the first there was little remedy. The failure of the crops spelled ruin and misery; and, though a paternal government did what it could to feed the starving, the people were often at the mercy of the ingenious bodger who had made a corner in wheat and rye. The cry against the dealer and the profiteer rings continuously all through the late Tudor period. It exercised government officials, economists and the Church. Harrison (14) relates at length the shifts the corn merchant employed to cheat the peasant. " It is a world to see how most places of the realm are pestered with purveyors, who take up eggs, butter, cheese, pigs, capons, hens, chickens, hogs, bacon, etc., in one market under pretence of their commissions, and suffer their wives to sell the same in another, or to poulterers in London. If these chapmen be absent two or three market days, then we may perfectly see these wares to be more reasonably sold, and therewith the crosses sufficiently furnished of all things. . . . As these things are worthy of redress," prays the good cleric, " so I wish that God would once open their eyes that deal thus, to see their own errors: for as yet some of them little care how many poor men suffer extremity, so that they may fill their purses, and carry away the gain."

Lever, later a canon of Durham, preaching before Edward VI at Paul's Cross, inveighed thus against the profiteer. " There is yet more stiff-necked stubbornness, devilish disobedience and greedy covetousness in one of

you of the common sort that keepeth this great swelling in the heart, having no occasion to set it forth in exercise, than is in ten of the worst of them that being in office and authority have many occasions to open and show themselves what they be. . . . If you had the powers unto your wills, ye had devoured whole countries, houses and goods, men and beasts, corn and cattle, as ye did begin. . . . Many of you keep your corn in your own barns. Yea, marry, why should we not keep our own corn in our own barns? Forsooth, ye now may not keep it for dread of God, obedience to the King's majesty, and pity of your poor neighbours. For God sayeth: *Qui abscondit frumenta, maledicetur in populis: benedictio autem super caput vendenciam:* he that hideth up corn shall be accursed among the people: but blessing shall be upon their heads that bringeth it forth to the markets to sell. Here ye hear the blessing and the curse of God." (15)

The second fear which hung over the countryside was the threat of enclosures and the consequent depopulation: and here again the peasant had a close ally in the Crown. Enclosure spelled more pasturage and less employment, more sheep and less tillage; it brought in its train high prices and want. The counties of Oxford, Buckingham and Northampton had petitioned the King in 1553 with six proverbs against sheep.

" The more sheep, the dearer is the wool
The more sheep, the dearer is the mutton
The more sheep, the dearer is the beef
The more sheep, the dearer is the corn
The more sheep, the dearer is the white meat
The more sheep, the fewer eggs for a penny." (16)

In this quarrel between the new landholders and the old

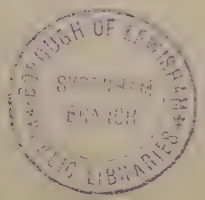
peasantry supported by the King are apparent some of the causes which went to the making of the Puritan revolution. At the same time, it is one of the earliest manifestations in England of the struggle which has never ceased between the urban and the agrarian populations, a struggle which may contain the germ of a future conflict more rooted and more bitter than any mere royal or national, religious or trade war of the past. In the sixteenth century, the Crown and the servants of the Crown believed it in the first place a political and economic necessity for the land to support a thriving agricultural class. In the second place, the Crown had not yet abandoned its attitude of support to the moral laws enunciated by the Church. The agrarian quarrel of the sixteenth century is one of the first skirmishes between mediæval idealism and modern individualism. The communal village was passing away. Men no longer looked upon agriculture as a means to subsistence; the end of farming, as they saw it, was to make money. The new type of farmer was succeeding and growing in estate. Harrison recalls a time when if a farmer among six or seven of his fellows " in bravery to show what store he had, did cast down his purse, and therein a noble, or six shillings in silver, it was very likely the rest could not lay down so much against it; whereas (nowadays) . . . will the farmer think his gains very small towards the middest of his term, if he have not six or seven years' rent lying by him, therewith to purchase a new lease, beside a fair garnish of pewter in his cupboard, three or four feather beds, so many coverlets and carpets of tapestry, a silver salt, a bowl for wine (if not a whole nest) and a dozen of spoons to furnish up the suit." (17) These yeomen, he points out, are for the most part, farmers to gentlemen [in another

passage he much deplores the fact that some gentlemen have so far lowered themselves as to turn graziers, butchers, tanners, sheepmasters, woodmen and *denique quid non* (18)] who by hard work and cunning have grown to great wealth, " in so much that many of them are able and do buy the lands of unthrifty gentlemen, and often setting their sons to the schools, to the universities, and to the Inns of Court; or otherwise leaving them sufficient lands whereupon they may live without labour, do make them by these means, to become gentlemen." (19)

All gentlemen, however, were not unthrifty, nor shared Harrison's feeling that they should live without labour. Many had themselves embarked in trade or adventure, and their new houses were the evidence of their success. With the decline of civil war in the kingdom, a new type of architecture was being learned. A home was no longer built for safety and defence, necessitating blank walls glooming over the countryside, from which the enemy could be spied as he came pricking over the sky-line. A new spacious magnificence was opening such as had never been seen. Houses like Christopher Hatton's Holdenby, Burghley's Hatfield, Lulworth, Montacute, were rising all over the country, designed at once for comfort and display. The architects had taken a new turn. They had travelled, had seen the rich structures of the Low Countries, and had caught the Italianate grace of decoration from the palaces of Antwerp. So they planted their roofs with massive coppices of chimneys, elaborately moulded. (Harrison speaks of the days when there were not above two or three in a whole township.) They carved rococo pediments above doors and windows. They built-in niches where classical statues might stand, or ranged them boldly along the roof edge. And above all they

studied the new vanity of glass, and filled their façades with windows to be at once a pleasure and a decoration; indeed at times they carried the craze to such a length that Bacon complained: "you shall have some fair houses so full of glass, that one cannot tell where to become to be out of the sun or cold." Finally, as if to accentuate the pleasures of peace, the gate houses, formerly crudely utilitarian buttresses of the great door, were thrown away from the parent structure and perched gracefully at the garden or park foot, copper-roofed miniature palaces, not for defence, but for adornment.

To complement these exteriors, the interiors too had abandoned their former strictly practical quality. No longer did narrow spiral staircases lead darkly into the unknown. In their place, fine, open, massive ways climbed in short flights from landing to landing, embraced by noble carved balustrades, while, on rich newels, stood figures, trophies, heraldic beasts. Painted representations of armorial bearings were cunningly inserted in the windows. Perhaps the owner might have brought home from Italy some marble frieze, a battle of Lapiths and Centaurs, to stand above the oak panels of his hall. The ceilings were moulded into florid arabesques. The walls were hung with tapestries or painted cloths. The furniture had increased and become more elaborate. "Certes," says Harrison, "in noblemen's houses it is not rare to see abundance of arras, rich hangings of tapestry, silver vessels and so much other plate as may furnish sundry cupboards, to the sum sometime of a thousand or two thousand pounds at the least: whereby the value of this and the rest of the stuff doth grow to be almost inestimable. Likewise in the house of knights, gentlemen, merchantmen, and some other wealthy citizens, it is not geson to



behold generally their great provision of tapestry, Turkey work, pewter, brass, fine linen, and thereto costly cupboards of plate, worth five or six hundred or a thousand pounds, to be deemed by estimation. But as hereinall these sorts do far exceed their elders and predecessors; so in time past the costly furniture stayed there, whereas now it is descended yet lower, even unto the inferior artificers and many farmers who have learned also to garnish their cupboards with plate, their beds with tapestry and silk hangings, and their tables with carpets and fine napery, whereby the wealth of our country (God be praised therefore, and give us grace to employ it well) doth infinitely appear." (20) On every side there was evidence of a new elegance and luxury, in the padded backs and stuffed seats of chairs, in the elaborately carved buffets, the drinking glasses. " It is a world to see in these our days, wherein gold and silver more aboundeth, how that our gentility as lothing those metals (because of the plenty) do now generally choose rather the Venice glasses both for our wine and beer, than any of those metals or stone wherein aforetime we have been accustomed to drink; but such is the nature of man generally that he most coveteth things difficult to be attained. . . . The poorest also will have glass if they may; but sith the Venetian is somewhat too dear for them, they content themselves with such as are made at home of fern and burned stone." (21) Even more abundant were silver and plate (Henry VIII is said to have acquired plate from the despoiled monasteries to the sum of £85,000), for the English gold- and silversmiths were second to none on the continent of Europe. Spoons, bowls and drinking cups were general possessions; and besides them were many marvellously wrought utensils of porcelain, of coconut, of ostrich eggs,

chased with gold and silver, jewels elaborately mounted in filigree, articles of lapis and agate. The Queen's collection of silver, plate and jewels was monstrous, and each year it was increased by the diligent flatteries of her favourites.

The key of this chord of opulence is passion. These new men, the men the Tudor monarchs raised to counterbalance the older aristocracy, were possessed by a prodigal demon, a lust of expenditure both of their goods and of themselves. If they stooped to the vilest artifices in their rage for acquisition, they spent their gains with hands as reckless to throw away as they had been to snatch. All things were their prey; no fish too big, none too mean for their net. If they had an ideal, their ideal was virtue; not the stiff-necked *virtus* of the Roman, but the subtler virtue of the Roman's descendants, a quality for which perhaps there is no English equivalent. Glorious success, it might be called, with the heavier accent upon the epithet. To such, the mere acquisition of wealth meant nothing. It was but the necessary provision, the tool towards the fulfilment of dreams which they knew in their hearts, and perhaps half hoped, would never be fulfilled, since each fulfilment only opened up a further and a wilder horizon to be crossed. Why, they would have argued, should they be deterred by petty scruples from acquiring the wherewithal to achieve the vision in which they believed? So they cringed and fawned, cheated and cajoled, with their eyes all the time fixed on a sky-line so far beyond the imagination of those they cheated that they missed the hatred in their victim's eyes.

It was an age of opportunity for a bold and witty man who would not hesitate to take risks, an age for such as Raleigh, its choicest flower. Son of a Devon squire of

neither wealth nor importance, Raleigh was already thirty, a late age for those times, and no better than an ensign with ten years of experience of foreign and barbarian war, when his opportunity arrived. At the end of 1581, an unknown soldier of fortune, he came to London with despatches out of Ireland. The splendid soldier, tall, with dark curling hair and beard, a steel grey eye, "a good presence in a handsome well compact person," knew what he was about. He could turn a dexterous compliment and compose an acceptable sonnet: he was a trained soldier, knew something of ships, and had ideas of administration. He had wit, experience, learning and passion, all of which he was able to demonstrate in his soft persuasive West Country accent. In three months, he had his company in Ireland, and permission to send a substitute. In a year he was lodged in Durham House in the Strand, between York House and the Savoy. In April, 1583, he had acquired grants of property. In May, he got his patent to licence the vintners, which proved, he said, worth £2000 a year to him. In 1585 he was appointed Lord Warden of the Stannaries; and in the following year he secured some 40,000 acres of Desmond land in Munster. Next came the Vice-Admiralty of the West; and, in 1587, he stood in the Queen's entry as Captain of the Guard, that narrow conduit pipe for the approaches of suitors and one in which large sums of money somehow stuck. The Queen's 'dear minion' had arrived. He had not reached his eminence without going down certain dark alleys, nor without making to himself a number of enemies: and, what would prove worse, friends. Yet to Raleigh all this was as nothing, merely a beginning. The money he had made, the position he had attained, were but the first steps

in the ambition he dreamed. His abbey at Sherborne, his home at Durham House, would be thronged with suitors. Here, perhaps, would be some ragged crippled sailor, escaped from a Spanish gaol in Guiana, with a tale of treasure, and, to win the Vice-Admiral's ear, a pearl the size of a marble, for these were the jewels he loved. There might follow Master Richard Browne, the lessee of the vintners' patent, to declare his accounts: or the lawyer of Oxford University to contest Sir Walter's rights over the wine shops. Next it may be a shipwright from Rye with the plans of the *Ark Raleigh* or the *Roebuck*, or a returned colonist from the Plantations of Virginia. Later an hour for reading, or for the composition of a sonnet to 'Cynthia, the Lady of the Sea,' to be passed with a deft compliment to Cynthia herself that night as she passed in state from her chapel. Perhaps there might be a secret word with one of King Philip's agents; in such an age, it was politic to stand in with all parties, or, at least, to try to know their minds. Then again would come Laurence Kemys, captain of the *Discovery* and Raleigh's chief admiral, to discuss the great matter of the descent to be made upon Guiana; or perhaps an excursion with George Clifford, the wild earl of Cumberland, to see the spoils of some carrack lately laid aboard and brought to Deptford. They would take boat and sweep down river on the ebb, their watermen cleverly shooting the piers of London Bridge, and lie in under the counter of the old *Golden Hinde*, the ship in which Drake sailed round the world. It had been moored here since the Queen made Drake a knight, as a monument to our prowess; but now it had been converted into a tavern, whither parties of sparks might take their *bona robas* to drink and laugh. Climbing the side of the wallowing carrack, Raleigh and

Cumberland would let their eyes fasten on the spoils. Not so good, they might think, as the cargo of that almost fabulous *Madre de Dios*. The inventory of that famous prize read as high sounding as Homer's catalogue of the Grecian ships. "Five millions of silver, all in pieces of eight or ten pound great, so that the whole quay lay covered with plates and chests of silver, besides pearls, gold and other stones that were not registered. The principal wares after the jewels consisted of spices, drugs, silks, calicoes, quilts, carpets and colours. The spices were pepper, cloves, maces, nutmegs, cinnamon, green ginger; the drugs were benjamin, frankincense, galingale, mirabolans, zocotrine, and camphire; the silks, damask, taffetas, sarcenets, altobassos (that is counterfeit cloth of gold), unwrought china silk, sleaved silks, white twisted silk, curled cypress. . . . There were also canopies, and coarse diaper towels, quilts of coarse sarcenet, and of calico, carpets like those of Turkey, whereunto are to be added the pearl, musk, civet and ambergris. Elephants' teeth, porcelain, vessels of china, coconuts, hides, ebon wood as black as jet, bedsteads of the same; cloth of the rinds of trees, very strange for the matter and artificial in workmanship, Mother of pearl, porcelain dishes, raw silk, cloves, calicoes, pearls, rubies and mace. . . . 8500 quintals of pepper, 900 of cloves, 700 of cinnamon, 500 of cochineal, 540 of other merchandise with such musk, diamonds and other precious stones. Of white small diamonds, 200; of small rubies, 1027; of sparks of diamonds, 1972; of great diamonds, 96; of other diamonds, 551; of orient pearls, 880; of pieces of gold, 7; of cinnamon, 3 bags; of India hides, 100; of gold rings, 10; one fashioned as a dragon with four rubies, a sapphire and a pearl, six with rubies and one with five

large rubies." That had indeed been a sack, but much of it had been lost, stolen by the fleet as soon as they came into Plymouth. Robert Cecil had hastened to the West Country to stop the pillage; but he had been too late. He arrested every man on the Exeter road who smelled of the prizes, and some of the plunder had been recovered, a bag of 320 diamonds, a bag of rubies, a chain of orient pearls, two chains of gold, four great pearls 'of the bigness of a fair pea,' four forks and four spoons of crystal. The prize lying at Deptford would not be so rich; yet the gentlemen examining the purser's list in the light of a storm lamp might be well content. These ships had been caught off the Barbary coast. Their cargo was 1400 chests of quicksilver with the arms of Castile and Leon, and a great quantity of bulls and indulgences and gilded missals, besides a hundred tuns of wine. The sharers in the adventure growl over the amount they will be amerced by Her Majesty before they recover even the amount of their principal.

They would slip back on the flood tide, past Wapping and Execution Dock. The rising water would just be covering the grisly carcases of four pirates but this morning hanged there, to wait until two more tides have flowed over them. Perhaps Raleigh might land at Billingsgate and trudge over the mucky cobblestones to dodge in under the lattice which marked the *Mermaid* or the *Windmill*, to spend an hour drinking and arguing with the 'Sirenaical gentlemen,' William Shakespeare and Jonson, the actors, and a very avid youth, Master John Donne of Lincoln's Inn. The talk might be high and dark, or of such unexampled shamelessness that it led once to the sealing up by Raleigh of Ben Jonson's mouth with wax. Perhaps, on the contrary, the Captain of the Guard might choose to

slip back to Whitehall to appear before his mistress. There through the evening, he would ply the Queen with compliments, hold hands and indulge her in the dalliance she loved, only to slip away later to the chambers of the maids of honour to repeat his vows to Bess Throgmorton. Or perhaps, seated in the armoury, he might dream and plan the great empire he would found upon the eastern coasts of America, wide-spreading colonies, rich in minerals and more durable wealth, peopled with folk of the English tongue, the crowning glory of his strange adventure.

It is not surprising that such an one should fall in the end through the machinations of Robert Cecil, his friend; no more startling than to find him, when condemned to death, pleading for his life with as cringing a posture and as fearful a mien as the basest. *The History of the World*, the final expedition to Guiana, his last grotesque throes and betrayal, his noble end on the scaffold are all of one piece. Raleigh loved life to spend it. It was not the pain of death that he feared, but extinction.

Raleigh is not alone in his full-blooded capacity. There are many like him, impregnated through and through with the varying passions of the time, and displaying as various a multiplicity. In high and low there is the same hurrying disease to devour life whole. There is the poor 'dead shepherd,' Christopher Marlowe, so truly the poet, and, with his gibing atheistical rationalism, so much the schoolboy, stabbed to death by his fellow secret service men in the Deptford tavern. There is Sir Philip Sidney, the Areopagite and knight-at-arms, to whose funeral two hundred poets brought their tributes. There is Ann Clifford's father, George, Earl of Cumberland, most gallant challenger at the Queen's accession jousts, but with a turbulent preference for tarry breeks and privateering.

There are those two oddly assorted volunteers for the Islands expedition of 1597, Henry Wriothesley, to be condemned to death as a traitor, and later to wear the Garter and become a member of the Privy Council, and John Donne, victim of sensuality and superstition. There are Richard Hakluyt, archdeacon, geographer and speculator, Richard Burbage, actor and painter, and Alfonso Ferrabosco, court musician and English spy. Last, the corresponding figure to Raleigh on the pediment of the age, the man of intellect opposed to the man of action, there stands Francis Bacon, as composite a being as any of the rest, and as typical. Scholar, philosopher, lawyer, politician, he knew himself to be the cleverest man about the court: but he was too clever, too ingenious to be ever much trusted; and his one mistake—when he opposed the granting of a subsidy to the Crown—put him back several steps in his advancement. There was so little time to live; and he was growing old. "One and thirty years," he complained to Burghley, "is a great deal of sand in the hour-glass." (23) Yet he succeeded and by means, which, in a later age, would have earned him a curling lip. The verdict against his one-time patron Essex, the man "whose I am more than any other's," the ally whose 'Device' for the Queen's entertainment he had penned, the friend to whom he was beholden for help at many times, was secured by the unwavering, unerring precision of Bacon, who saw in the earl's downfall no more than a step in his own progress. So in his lodge at Twickenham Park, surrounded by his handsome young men, Jones, Percy, "his coach companion and bed companion—a proud, profane, costly fellow," he lived his life of luxury, in debt to his ears, yet able to put off his cares and imperturbably pen, in an elaborate Italian cursive,

his letters couched in that "enigmatical folded" style which his correspondents found so trying, and his essays, wherein emotion hardly seems to colour the thought, until he speaks of buildings and of gardens, when the fine mind, which could weigh a thought or a word to a hair, expands and spreads itself to these warming pleasures. If these be the paragons, there were many others no less magnificent; Essex, the last paladin, Christopher Hatton, with his manor at Holdenby and his strawberry gardens in Ely Place. And below these magnificos, the burgesses of London, the members of the craft companies, of the great trading corporations, the Levant Company and the Merchant Adventurers, putting out

> "monies on return
> From Venice, Paris or some island passage
> Of six times to and fro."

The old guild system was slowly breaking down before the demands of individualism: and the men who, succeeding in evading their regulations or in capturing their machinery, were piling up fortunes as rich as those of the monopolists, and spending their money on visionary projects. These were the Merchant Adventurers who met King Philip of Spain on his entry into Antwerp in 1549, "all in a livery of purple velvet in grain coats, and paned hose embroidered full of silver waves like the waves of the sea; their doublets and drawing out of their hose purple satin, their hats of purple velvet with gold bands, fair brooches and white feathers; and each of them a chain of gold about his neck of great value; buskins of purple velvet; their rapiers, daggers, spurs, stirrups and bridles all guilt; the furniture of their horses was of

purple velvet, saddles and trappings, etc., embroidered with gold and green silk and white, and green feathers on their horses' heads." (24) Of such too were the eighty merchants who met Alençon, the Queen's suitor, in Antwerp in 1581, all on horseback, dressed in black velvet with golden chains about their necks, " for which the said Governor and Company received thanks and commendations from Her Majesty and the Lords of the Council." (25) It was men of this type who raised the gilt tower in the goldsmith's quarter of London, with an ever-filling fountain.

The great days of speculation, insurance and so forth had not yet begun. Many of these rich citizens were still retailers; and, at least, if they were partners or shareholders in an adventure, they knew their business. Their wives sat outside their shops to draw custom. " Well," says Mistress Mulligrub in Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*, " she has been as proper a woman as any in Chepe. She paints now, and yet she keeps her husband's old customers to him still. In troth a fine-faced wife, in a wainscot carved seat, is a worthy ornament to a tradesman's shop, and an attractive, I warrant: her husband shall find it in the custom of his ware, I'll assure him." To the foreigners, they seemed to be ridiculously well treated. " They are well dressed, fond of taking it easy," says one, " and commonly leave the care of household matters and drudgery to their servants. They sit before their doors, decked out in fine clothes, in order to see and be seen by the passers-by. In all banquets and feasts they are shown the greatest honour: they are placed at the upper end of the table, where they are served first. . . . All the rest of their time they employ in walking and riding, in playing at cards or otherwise in visiting their friends and keeping

company, conversing with their equals (whom they term gossips) and their neighbours, and making merry with them at child-births, christenings, churchings and funerals; and all with the permission and knowledge of their husbands, as such is the custom. . . . This is why England is called the Paradise of married women. . . ."

" The women," this traveller continues, " are beautiful, fair, well dressed and modest, which is seen more than elsewhere, as they go about the streets without any covering either of huke or mantle, hood, veil or the like. Married women only wear a hat both in the street and in the house; those unmarried go without a hat, although ladies of distinction have lately learned to cover their faces with silken masks or vizards, and feathers—for indeed, they change very easily, and that every year, to the astonishment of many." (26)

Indeed the rapidity with which the English men and women changed the fashion of their clothes, was the wonder of all nations; but it is another shred of evidence of the enormous interest which the nation took in everything. It made the people the butt, not only of foreigners, but of their own humorists. They chose their rig from all countries and mixed it with an admirable lack of regard for its suitability. " Far fet and dear bought is good for ladies " was the commonplace proverb. " It appeareth that no people in the world is so curious in new fangles as they be," growls one critic. (27) " Why," scoffs another, " had ever Prometheus more shapes than the back suits? or the Hydra more heads than the back new garments? not so variable for their matter, as changeable for their fashion. To-day French, tomorrow English, the next day Spanish, to-day Italianate, tomorrow for fashion a devil incarnate. *O tempora!*

O mores!" (28) "This fantastical folly," ingeminates the Canon of Windsor, "how much cost is bestowed nowadays upon our bodies and how little upon our souls! how many suits of furniture hath the one and how little furniture the other! . . . Such is our mutability that to-day there is none to the Spanish guise; tomorrow the French toys are most fine and delectable, ere long no such appeal as that which is after the high Almaine fashion, by and by the Turkish manner is generally best liked, otherwise the Morisco gowns, the Barbarian sleeves, the mandilion worn to Colley Weston-ward, and the short French breeches make such a comely vesture that except it were a dog in a doublet, you shall not see any so disguised as are my countrymen of England." (29)

One year the world would be all for short, puffed hose, long doublets and tight sleeves; the next long hose to below the knee, the doublet hollow-bellied, the sleeve puffed at the shoulder; another, doublets are "no less monstrous than the rest, now the fashion to have them hang down to the middle of their thighs . . . being so hard quilted and stuffed, bombasted and sewed, as they can very hardly stoop down, or decline themselves to the ground, so stiff and steady they stand about them." (30) The shirts of these gallants were of fine embroidered silk, and their outer coverings of velvet, damask, satin, taffeta of all colours, usually slashed and embroidered. The fashionable colours, Harrison notes, were pease-porridge tawny, popinjay blue, lusty gallant, and devil-in-the-hedge, whatever the two last may be. The "treble-quadruple Daedalian ruff," the stiff-necked rabato, "that have more arches for Pride to row under than can stand under five London bridges," (31) stood out from the neck a foot wide. One year they ran a ruff "12, yea, 16 lengths a

piece, set three or four times double and is of some fitly called 'Three steps and a half to the Gallows.'" (32) But, says the spiteful Stubbes, "if Aeolus with his blasts or Neptune with his storms chance to hit upon the crazy barque of their bruised ruffs, then they go flip flap in the wind like rags flying abroad and lie upon their shoulders, like the dish-clout of a slut." (33)

Hats changed as rapidly as their weeds. "Some are of pan silk, some of velvet, some of taffeta, some of sarcenet, some of wool; and which is most curious, some of a certain kind of fine hair, far fetched and dear bought, you may be sure. And so common a thing it is that every servingman, countryman and others, even all indifferently, do wear these hats. For he is of no account or estimation among men, if he have not a velvet or a taffeta hat, and that must be pinked and cunningly carved in the best fashion. . . . Besides this, of late there is a new fashion of wearing their hats sprung up among them, which they father upon the Frenchmen, namely to wear them without bands; but how unseemly (I will not say how assy) a fashion that is, let the wise judge." (34)

Even the hair must change with fashion. Sometimes it was cropped, sometimes curled, at others allowed to grow as long as a woman's, or again, cut round about the ears. "Neither will I meddle," says Harrison, "with the vanity of our beards, of which some are shaven from the chin, like those of Turks, some cut short like the beard of the marquis Otto, some made round like a rubbing brush, others with a *pique de vent* (O fine fashion!) or now and then suffered to grow long." (35) Not only the shape but the colour also changed with taste and in all cases the head was set off with earrings, of gold or pearl or precious stones.

If men raved after new styles, the women were as eager. "They do now far exceed the lightness of our men (who nevertheless are transformed from the cap even to the very shoe) and such staring attire as in time past was supposed meet for none but light housewives only, is now become a habit for chaste and sober matrons. What should I say of their doublets with pendant cod-pieces on the breast full of jags and cuts, and sleeves of sundry colours, their galligascons to bear out their bums, and make them to fit plumb round (as they term it) about them? their farthingales and diversely coloured nether stocks of silk, jersey and such like, whereby their bodies are rather deformed than commended? I have met with some of these trulls in London so disguised that it hath passed my skill to discern whether they were men or women." (36) "In looks like Lais," another takes up the strain, "in fashion like Flora, in manners like Thais, more wavering than the wind, and more mutable than the moon; in gait and gesture more dainty, in the church more angelical, in the streets modest and amiable, abroad among men in fineness superficial, but at home by themselves more sluttish and bestial. Yet I mean not all but the worst, such as entertain your pride, who from the top to the toe are so disguised, that, though they be in sex women, yet in attire they appear to be men, and are like Androgyni, who counterfeiting the shape of either kind are indeed neither, so while they were in condition women, and would seem in apparel men, they were neither men nor women, but plain monsters." (37)

The artificiality of men's dress was rivalled by women. See a lady in her vast starched yellow ruff, her narrow doublet of peach-coloured satin all covered with cut work, the chest laid open (and during one extravagant season

with her breasts displayed between laces) with her enormous cartwheel farthingale as wide at the hips as at the hem, supporting her dress of watchet velvet, an elaborately chased naked ivory figure at her breast, a pomander to ward off the odours and the plague in one hand, her fan, her ' flap of feathers,' in the other, her hair curled and bolstered out and a wreath of gold or silver intertwined, her cheeks radiant as she sweeps to her coach, a tiny Maltese terrier at her heels. " Peace, Cynick," says John Marston:

" Peace Cynick; see what yonder doth approach;
A cart? A tumbril? No. A badged coach.
What's in't? Some man? No, nor yet womankind,
But a celestial angel, fair, refined.
The devil as soon! Her mask so hinders me,
I cannot see her beauty's deity.
Now that it's off, she is so vizarded,
So steeped in lemon's juice, so sulphured,
I cannot see her face. Under one hood
Two faces: but I never understood
Or saw one face under two hoods till now:
'Tis the right semblance of old Janus' brow.
Her mask, her vizard, her loose hanging gown
(For her loose lying body), her bright spangled crown,
Her long slit sleeves, stiff busk, puffed farthingale
Is all that makes her thus angelical.
Alas! her soul struts round about her neck;
Her seat of sense is her rabato set;
Her intellectual is a feigned niceness,
Nothing but clothes and simpering preciseness." (38)

As the gentleman's beard, so the lady's hair changed its shape and its colour year by year. The " mints of

fashion " as Massinger called them were as hard at work as Lanvin and Patou. New scents, new cosmetics came and went, devised by Doctor Plasterface. " By this card, he is the most exquisite in forging of veins, sprightening of eyes, dying of hair, sleeking of skins, blushing of cheeks, sulphuring of breasts, blanching of teeth, that ever made an old lady gracious by candlelight." (39)

The changes in fashion were not confined to the upper classes, but were followed by all the town. " I tell you I cannot endure it," shrills Gertrude, the merchant's daughter. " I must be a lady! Do you wear your coif with a London licket, your stamen petticoat with two guards, the buffin gown with tuff-taffety cape and the silver lace? I must be a lady and I will be a lady. I like some humours of the city dames well, to eat cherries only at an angel a pound, good; to dye rich scarlet black, pretty; to line a grogram gown clean through with velvet, tolerable; their pure linen, their smocks of three pound a smock are to be borne withal. But your mincing niceries, your taffeta pipkins, durance petticoats, and silver bodkins —God's my life, as I shall be a lady, I cannot endure it." (40)

It is all hurry, change, and novelty. Tobacco from America, starch from Holland, handwriting from Italy, and coaches, which soon forced on London a traffic problem less soluble than that of any city of to-day, from France were only a few of the refinements brought back by the now all pervading, inquisitive Englishmen, who travelled the world, and, with the traveller's eye, collected the strange things of foreign nations, and copied whatever they beheld. Not only the material goods were brought back, but also customs and habits of the most excessive nature. The Englishman Italianate had always been reprobated, as one who brought home " nothing but mere

atheism, infidelity, vicious conversation, and ambitious and proud behaviour. . . . They have learned in Italy to go up and down also in England, with pages at their heels, finely apparelled, whose face and countenance shall be such as showeth the master not to be blind in his choice," remarks Harrison with discretion.

Their appetite for novelties was inexhaustible. "When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian." Farley describes the common man's amusements as follows:

> "To see a strange outlandish fowl,
> A quaint baboon, an ape, an owl,
> A dancing bear, a giant's bone,
> A foolish engine moved alone,
> A morris dance, a puppet play,
> Mad Tom to sing a roundelay,
> A woman dancing on a rope,
> Bull baiting also at the *Hope*,
> A rhymer's jests, a juggler's cheats,
> A tumbler showing cunning feats,
> Or players acting on the stage,
> There goes the bounty of our age;
> But unto any pious motion,
> There's little coin and less devotion."

Another sign of the change was the manner in which the politer pleasures were ousting the older forms of amusement. Archery was as good as dead. The theatre on Bankside was gradually putting the bear and bull baiting rings in Paris Garden out of business, despite the Queen's efforts to keep the cruel sport alive. There was much dancing, though the maids in London no longer danced for garlands hung athwart the streets. The play-

house claimed all, much to the dissatisfaction of the Calvinists.

The playhouse was to the citizen the complement of the church. The preachings gave him amusement and emotional play. So did the theatre. Between the two he would find all the intellectual stimulant he wanted. If he would be roused or suffer all the pleasures of catharsis, there was Shakespeare to be had at Blackfriars or at the Globe over Bankside way. If he wanted a free commentary on politics, fashions, or the extravagances of the day he would find "that pestilent fellow," Ben Jonson played by the Children of the Queen's Chapel, or the less erudite John Marston or Dekker; while, for blood and thunder, there was the Red Bull up in Clerkenwell. Here he could push in after dinner, at two or three of the afternoon, and edge his way through the yard, crowded with men such as himself, citizens, apprentices, the ruffians and the bullies, the great lords' servants in their blue coats and silver badges; here and there a trollop of the town, vizarded, spying up and down, and the women selling oranges and apples. Above in the galleries stood the wealthier; and in the 'rooms,' the great ladies and the gentlemen of the court. Then, on the second blast of the trumpet, would come tumbling on to the platform below the gallery, little Salathiel Pavey, "the stage's jewel," with two or three others of the children.

"Pray you, away; why fellows! God so, what do you mean?" The play is on.

Gosson, in his *Schoole of Abuse* of 1579, gives a lively picture of the crowd. "In our assemblies at plays in London, you shall see such heaving and shoving, such itching and shouldering to sit by women. Such care for their garments that they be not trod on; such eyes to their

laps that no chips light in them; such pillows to their backs that they take no hurt; such masking in their ears, I know not what; such giving them pippins to pass the time; such playing at footsaunt without cards; such ticking, such toying, such smiling, such winking, and such manning them home when the sports are ended, that it is a right comedy to mask their behaviour, to watch their conceits, as the cat for the mouse, and as good a course at the game itself, to dog them a little, or follow aloof by the print of their feet, and so discover by slot where the deer taketh soil."

England of the last years of the Tudors was not a Paradise. There was poverty; there was hunger; in the cities there were quite frequent visitations of the plague. The streets were foul; sanitation did not exist; and the habits of the people from the Queen downwards were far from clean. The roads and the whole countryside were infested with thieves, highwaymen and beggars, returned soldiers, escaped apprentices, out of work labourers, with their morts and their doxies, a brotherhood as complete as that of the Coquillards. Justice was administered with a cruel and quite ruthless hand; the details of execution, the hanging, drawing and quartering read as of inhuman savagery. Toleration of religious opinion was further from men's minds than the possibility of men's flying. If money was more easily got than fifty years before, prices had risen to compensate. The system of monopolies led to disgraceful imposition on the man in the street. And yet——

And yet, there is no denying that this is a happier England than ever before or since. At no other time has that completely natural lyric note sounded so coolly in our literature. At no other time have our songs been so spontaneous a profession of the people. These are signs

which cannot be brushed lightly aside as worthless evidence. It is the youthful note of a proud ambitious people, as foreigners found them, strong in themselves and relying on a government and a monarchy which, in spite of manifest shortcomings, were both thinking and acting for the commonweal, for the benefit of the whole country and not of particular sections, a government which tried its best to hold the scales evenly between the rich and the poor, and still subscribed to the moral laws of the early Christian Fathers. This England was a country knit into a nation, a country which, singlehanded, had held off and defeated enemies of ten times its strength. It was young enough and eager enough in the race of nations to dare all for what it believed in, itself.

Where is the core of this spirit? Turn and look at the strange figure seated on the throne. It might be a doll. The stiff white satin brocade is distended hugely over an enormous farthingale; above is the narrow-waisted doublet embroidered with silver thread. The chest lies bare in token of virginity. The enormous ruff flares and sways behind the head, towering above the crown. Look at the tiny feet in their satin slippers. The face set beneath a flamboyant coarse red wig is covered with a network of tiny wrinkles. The nose is long and hooked from the bridge. Arched—overarched—brows are pitched across black unwinking eyes. Black teeth are discovered through narrow painted lips. The cheeks are raddled with paint. The long fingers, laden with rings of pearl, diamond, ruby, sapphire, grip the arms of the chair with a tenacity as fierce as their owner's grip on life.

"Most sure, the goddess
On whom these airs attend."

Is this ancient monster the woman whom the kings of Europe courted? Are these shrunk talons the fingers which Essex, Raleigh, Blunt and Harington kiss and fondle? Look back thirty years. Sir James Melville, that feline time-server, is kneeling at her feet, telling her that the Italian dress becomes her above the French or English weed. She stands looking down at him, her red gold hair brisking in little curls from beneath her bonnet and caul. She asks whether she or her sister of Scotland is the fairer. The diplomat smiles: they are both the fairest ladies in their own dominions. She taps her foot petulantly at his fencing; and he goes on to add that she, Elizabeth, is the whiter. Which, she asks him, is of the higher stature. He answers, " My Queen." " Then," replies Elizabeth, " she is too high; for I am myself neither too high nor too low. . . . Does she play upon the virginals? " " Reasonably—for a Queen."

" That same day after dinner," continues Sir James in his narrative, " my lord of Hunsdon drew me up to a quiet gallery, that I might hear some music (but he said he durst not avow it) where I might hear the Queen play upon the virginals. . . . Seeing her back was toward the door, I entered upon the chamber and stood a pretty space hearing her play excellently well. But she left off immediately so soon as she turned about and saw me. She appeared to be surprised to see me and came forward, seeming to strike me with her hand, alleging she used not to play before men, but when she was solitary, to shun melancholy. She asked me how I came there. I answered . . . ' I heard such melody ravished me, whereat I was drawn in ere I knew how; excusing my fault of homeliness, as being brought up in the court of France, where such freedom was allowed. . . . She enquired whether

my Queen or she played best. In that I found myself obliged to give her the praise. She said my French was good and asked if I could speak Italian; which she spoke reasonably well. Then she spoke to me in Dutch (*i.e.* German) which was not good. . . . She enquired of me whether she or my Queen danced best. I answered my Queen danced not so high and disposedly as she did. . . . Then again she wished that she might see the Queen at some convenient place of meeting. I offered to convey her secretly to Scotland by post, clothed like a page . . . telling her that her chamber might be kept in her absence as though she were sick. . . . She appeared to like that kind of language, only answered it with a sigh, saying, 'Alas! if I might do it thus.'" (41)

She had Sir James bewitched, as she had all the others, Leicester, Hatton, Simier, Alençon. By the time she was forty, she had made of herself a legend, which all England believed. She might rage, swear by God's wounds, thump her fist, box her courtiers' ears, storm at her maids-of-honour, she was still that tantalizing young queen, whose hand had been sought by Spain, France, Russia, Sweden and Savoy. By 1588 she was as stylized as her portrait: and her effigy was so fixed in the hearts of her people that thinning grey hair, hollow cheeks, fallen curves were no more than cracks in the canvas.

"Do not," saith she, "upbraid me with miserable lack of children; for every one of you and as many as are Englishmen, are children and kinsmen to me; of whom, if God defend me not (which God forbid) I cannot without injury be accounted barren. But I commend you that ye have not appointed me an husband, for that were most unworthy the majesty of an absolute Princess, and unbeseeming your wisdom, which are subjects born. Never-

theless if it please God that I enter into another course of life, I promise you that I will do nothing which may be prejudicial to the commonwealth, but will take such a husband as near as may be, as will have as great a care of the commonwealth as myself. But if I continue in this kind of life I have begun, I doubt not but God will so direct mine own and your counsels, that ye shall not need to doubt of a successor, which may be more beneficial to the commonwealth than he which may be born of me, considering that the issue of the best Princes many times degenerateth. And to me it shall be full satisfaction, both for the memorial of my name, and for my glory also, if, when I shall let my last breath, it be engraven upon my marble tomb; Here lieth Elizabeth, which reigned a virgin, and died a virgin." (41)

The Queen's words convey the spirit which bound her to her subjects, and her subjects to her, which defined, for as long as Elizabeth should be Queen, the attitude of the Crown to the subject, and of Englishmen to a fantastic, ideal sovereign. No other monarch has ever won at the same time such unbroken respect and so much personal admiration from her people. Even the House of Commons, rancid with grievances, forbore to plague her. "I am not so simple," she told a departing deputation in 1601, "to suppose that there be some of the Lower House whom the grievances never touched; and for them I think they speak out of zeal for their countries, and not out of spleen and malevolent affection as being parties grieved: and I take it exceedingly grateful from them, because it gives us to know that no respects or interests had moved them other than the minds they bear to suffer no diminution of our honour and our subjects' love unto us. The zeal of which affection tending to ease my people and knit

their hearts unto me, I embrace with a princely care; for above all earthly treasure, I esteem my people's love more than which I desire not to merit. . . . And though you have had and may have many Princes more mighty and more wise, sitting in this seat, yet you never had or shall have any that will be more careful and loving. . . ."

The words are formal; but they still carry at this distance a passion of loyalty and devotion to an ideal, which drew a reciprocal devotion to herself as something that was of England. When, in those last four days, her mind wandering, her voice almost gone, as she lay, finger in mouth, stalling off creeping death with obstinate persistence, they asked her whether Beauchamp should succeed, the old mind flashed out once. "I will have no rogue's son on my seat," she croaked. On 24th March, 1603, the spirit flickered up and died. The youth of England was over.

CHAPTER THREE

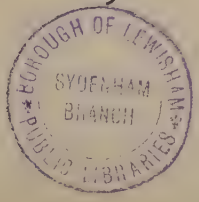
(i)

The metamorphosis which was to come over this ingenuous England was a long time preparing. To trace its progress it is necessary to turn back half a century.

The sin of covetousness, which is the father of avarice, is of respectable antiquity. Delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, and confirmed by the thunder, the lightning and the noise of the trumpet, it was reiterated by the Apostles and the early Christian Fathers along with the other three mortal sins of the Decalogue. "The love of money," says Saint Paul, "is the root of all evil." Neither the early Christian Fathers nor the mediæval Church were content to shrug their shoulders and accept it as a necessary failing of frail humanity. They were as fully aware as Moses that this sin was fraught with more terrible social dangers than any other, and that murder, lust and perjury actually sprang from it. It was therefore from its earliest days that the Christian Church reserved its heaviest denunciations for the usurer, a term which embraced not only the lender of money upon interest, but every unconscionable bargainer, the monopolist, the profiteer, the hoarder, the harsh creditor, the man, who, in their own clean phrase, was 'a taker of advantages.'

Unhappily, however we may strive, necessity sometimes lays low the simplest of aspirations. The mediæval aristocracy, both lay and ecclesiastical, was faced by the

ever unsolved problem of supply and demand; and though it set itself courageously to overcome its difficulties, circumstances, allied with human nature, were as adamant to its experiments as they are to those of economists to-day. Nevertheless rulers did not shirk the responsibility. They did their best to harmonize their necessities and their creeds. The unit of government might grant a monopoly; a mediæval state might organize a series of monopolies, at once for its personal advantage and for the more practical efficiency of distribution: but it was very jealous to observe that its licence was not abused. A city might allow financial trading to flourish; but it did not hesitate to control financial houses by stringent rules and heavy amercements. In a world in which the majority of the population depended for existence upon the success of the harvest, and in which its failure spelt ruin and distress, the question of usury was one of vital importance. In a society where opportunities for the astute to corner some commodity of universal need were frequent, it was not surprising that both Church and State took a supreme interest in the questions of fair trade and scrupulous finance, set about as they were with pitfalls both to the citizen and the Christian. Unfortunately, the root of all evil is also the root of policy. Money, or its equivalents, cannot, until some better means for the regulation of affairs is invented, be destroyed. The exact definition of usury raised an immense crop of problems for the lawyers and the moralists. It was obvious that the mere act of lending money was not evil, might, in fact, be a worthy action: but, on the other hand, loans upon fixed interest were utterly immoral, and had been severely reprobated by the Evangelists. Again, the raising of a vast sum of money by a state from the financial houses for the purpose



of making war, and its repayment, guaranteed upon a heavy increase in the taxation of the subject, could not be brought within the bounds of common usury; but the loan of a few marks to a farmer to buy seeds, or an artisan to procure the materials for his craft, at a rate of interest equal to that of the state loan, was flagrant abomination. The mediæval Church and civil government, though in the aggregate hard-fisted and grasping, regarded the individual from a paternal point of view, and was always ready to come to the aid of the poor and oppressed, so long as the oppressor himself was an individual. In fine, so far as lay in their power, they attempted to differentiate clearly between public necessity and private gain.

"The poorest ploughman is in Christ equal with the greatest prince that is. Let them therefore have sufficient to maintain them, and to find their necessaries. A plough land must have sheep, yea, they must have sheep to dung their ground for bearing of corn; for if they have no sheep to fat the ground, they shall have but bare corn and thin. They must have swine for their food, to make their veneries or bacon of: their bacon is their venison, for they shall now have *hangum tuum*, if they get any other venison; so that bacon is their necessary meat to feed on, which they may not lack. They must have other cattle: as horses to draw their plough, and for carriage of things to the markets; and kine for their milk and cheese, which they must live upon and pay their rents. These cattle must have pasture, which pasture if they lack, the rest must needs fail them: and pasture they cannot have, if the land be taken in, and inclosed from them. . . . Therefore, for God's love, restore their sufficient unto them, and search no more what is the cause of rebellion. But see and 'beware of covetousness'; for covetousness is the

cause of rebellion." (1) Latimer's lively sentences contain the Church's whole view of a society, permanent and unalterable, in which every individual has his rights and his duties; and show that the preservation of its structure is in his eyes the part of the lay and ecclesiastical authority. Again, in the same sermon, he says (speaking of the need for promoters to lay cases against those who offend against the poor): " I hear there be usurers in England that will take forty in the hundred; but I hear not of promoters to put them up. We read not, this covetous farmer or landed man of the gospel bought corn in the markets to lay it up in store, and then sell it again. But, and if it please your highness, I hear say that in England we have landlords, nay, step-lords I might say, that are become graziers; and burgesses that are become regraters; and some farmers will regrate and buy up all the corn that cometh to the markets, and lay it up in store, and sell it again at a higher price when they see their time. . . . Yea, and (as I hear say) aldermen now-a-days are become colliers: they be both woodmongers and makers of coals. I would wish he might eat nothing but coals for a while, till he had amended it. There cannot be a poor body buy a sack of coals, but it must come through their hands." (2)

The voice of Latimer is not alone in the denunciation of the usurer and extortioner. His rough sentences have their parallels in every age of the Church's history. That the representatives of both Church and civil power fell to the sin which they so constantly inveighed against, is unhappily a commonplace of history. But, to quote Professor Tawney, " when all is said, the fact remains that, on the small scale involved, the problem of moralizing economic life was faced and not abandoned. The experiment may have been impracticable, and almost from the

first, it was discredited by the notorious corruption of ecclesiastical authorities, who preached renunciation, and gave a lesson in greed. But it had in it something of the heroic, and to ignore the nobility of the conception is not less absurd than to idealize its practical results." (3)

(ii)

The history of the Puritan revolution in England is made up of two currents, the one economic, or economico-political, the other religious. These currents are nearing their point of juncture during the reign of Henry VIII. They join in the reign of Mary. But for many years after that, like the Blue and White Niles, they run side by side unmixed, the waters retaining their individual colour; and it is not until the early Stuart kings that they merge and take on the same sombre hue.

It is of no moment whether Henry VIII was or was not justified in dissolving the monasteries and other religious houses. His motives were a mixture of political expediency and personal acquisitiveness. The question of the morality of the tenants of the abbeys is also beside the point. Some, to be sure, were openly scandalous; a few of the smaller houses had distinct affinities with a modern low-class night club. Of others, the worst that could be said was that, like numerous individuals in the Church, they had become widely secularized, especially those, such as Fountains, Rievaulx and Whitby, where extensive properties demanded a close and thorough administration. Their crime from the point of view of the monarchy was that they alone in the kingdom owed a double allegiance, and that their allegiance to the Pope came before their allegiance to the King. The break with the Pope had

caused Henry to concentrate in his person the final authority over the souls as well as the bodies of his subjects. The Acts of Appeals (1533), of Supremacy (1534), and of Papal Authority (1536), freed England for all time from interference from without her coasts. The inmates of the monasteries alone still remained outside the cast of the loop. It was to bring them within it that Henry took his final step of dissolving the religious houses.

The dissolution was therefore inevitable to Henry's policy, the removal of " divers seditious and contentious persons, being imps of the Bishop of Rome." Its immediate result was to present the Crown with an annual revenue of some £130,000 a year with a capital value of perhaps twenty millions sterling, quite apart from a fortune in gold, silver, plate and jewels. (4) " If ever poet's fiction of a golden shower rained into Danae's lap found a moral or a real performance, it was now." The King, if he chose to handle his new wealth carefully, was independent of Parliamentary aid.

On the social fabric, the consequences were far reaching. The disposal of the monastic lands did not stop at sales and presents to favourite nobles and the King's immediate entourage. These in their turn handed their share of the spoils over to the brokers, who dealt with them in the open market. By this means, a large number of persons became half unconsciously the King's accomplices in the spoliation, a fact which manifested itself when Mary attempted to bring about a reconciliation with Rome. The holders for value were quite agreeable to be civil to the Pope, but they refused point blank to restore any of the monastic property, a point of view which was to appear again among holders of 'malignants'' estates after the restoration of Charles II.

To turn to the religious current, by the end of the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the sober English layman of the educated classes regarded the Church as a body with little but amused distaste. Possessing as a whole nearly one-fifth of the total property of the nation, it had failed so signally in its duties that the word ' priest ' was a byword for sloth and greed. The humbler clergy were ignorant and lax. The bishops, fraught with politics and business, left their dioceses in the charge of suffragans and subordinates. In his famous *Sermon of the Plough*, Latimer voiced the opinions of the laity. " Now for the fault of these unpreaching prelates, methink I could guess what might be said for excusing of them. They are so troubled with lordly living, they be so placed in palaces, couched in courts, ruffling in their tents, dancing in their dominions, burdened with ambassages, pampering of their paunches, like a monk that maketh his jubilee; munching in their mangers, and moiling in their gay manors and mansions, and loitering in their lordships that they cannot attend it. They are otherwise occupied, some in the King's matters, some are ambassadors, some of the privy council, some to furnish the court, some are lords of parliament, some are presidents and comptrollers of the mint. . . . Should one have ministers of the church to be comptrollers of the mint? Is this a meet office for a priest that hath a cure of souls? . . . I would fain know who controlleth the devil at home in his parish, while he controlleth the mint. . . . They are lords and no labourers: but the devil is diligent at his plough. He is no unpreaching prelate: he is no lordly loiterer from his cure, but a busy ploughman; so that among all the prelates, and among all the pack of them that have cure, the devil shall go for my money, for he still applieth his

business. Therefore, ye unpreaching prelates, learn of the devil: to be diligent in doing your office, learn of the devil: and if ye will not learn of God or good men, for shame, learn of the devil." (5)

The Church's greed was as notorious as its secularity. "The goodliest lordships, manors, lands and territories are theirs. Besides this they have the tenth part of all the corn, meadow, pasture, grass, wool, colts, calves, lambs, pigs, geese and chickens. Over and besides the tenth part of every servant's wages, the tenth part of the wool, milk, honey, wax, cheese and butter. Yea, and they look so narrowly upon their profits that the poor wives must be countable to them of every tenth egg, or else she getteth not her rights at Easter, shall be taken as an heretic. . . . What money get they by mortuaries, by hearing of confessions (and yet they will keep thereof no counsel), by hallowing churches, altars, super-altars, chapels and bells, by cursing of men and absolving them again for money? What a multitude of money gather the pardoners in a year? How much money get the summoners by extortion in a year, by citing the people in the commissary's court and afterwards releasing the appearance for money? Finally the infinite number of begging friars, what get they in a year? . . . Who is she that will set her hands to a day's work to get iij pence a day and may have at least xx pence a day to sleep an hour with a friar, a monk or a priest? What is he that would labour for a groat a day and may have at least xij pence a day to be a bawd to a priest, a monk or a friar?" So Simon Fish in the year 1528, of those whom he calls cormorants, locusts, blood-suppers and idle gluttons. (6)

The ousting of the Church of Rome did something to purge the church; but the Church of England was still

a follower of the Church of Rome in doctrine. The influence in the opposite direction was not yet that of the Protestants, but of the schoolmen, such as Erasmus and More, protestant in effect, but rather out of humanism than out of theology. Tyndale's Bible of 1528 was banned and burned. Yet the leaven was rising. The clergy were enjoined to preach against the Pope, to put down images, and to teach the articles of faith and the Commandments in the vernacular. The injunction of 1538, while further admonishing them in the matter of the 'detestable offence of idolatry,' is notable for the ordinance that "one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English," Coverdale's translation, shall be furnished to every church before Easter of the following year, and set up in some convenient place so that the congregation may read it.

The result of this last command had not been foreseen. Instead of leading to a unison of views of congregation and church, it had precisely the opposite effect, producing a complete confusion of belief. Four years later, except to the upper and middle classes, permission to read the Bible was withdrawn. Apart from his political position *vis-à-vis* Rome, and the administrative reforms enforced by his Injunctions, Henry's views had not diverged from those he held before the schism. He reasserted his theological position by the Six Articles of 1539, wherein the doctrines of transubstantiation, of communion in one kind, were reaffirmed, celibacy of the clergy commended, and the expediency of auricular confession recognized.

So far, what may be called the Puritan influence, the ideas of the Reformation, had scarcely touched England. Isolated as they were, the English had not, except to rebuke, meddled with the enthusiasms of Luther. The

reforming party was attempting to work out the solution of their own religious problem in their own way and by their peculiar talent for compromise. But already there were rising the first puffs of a strong wind, blowing from the east, which would gather such force as to sweep a king from the throne and level the Church of England to the ground.

(iii)

There is something in the air of the Alps propitious to monsters. So many have drawn their strength from the cities adorning their lakesides, and, going forth to breathe a message of good-will—Calvin, Rousseau, Lenin—have left in their tracks the stains of misery and blood.

While the other leaders of Protestantism were trying in some fashion to harmonize their doctrines with the past, and to effect some arrangement with established government, Calvin, from the first, refused all temptations to compromise. Gifted with an intellect as subtle as it was powerful, and with a pertinacity which can only shine in one who is persuaded of the impregnability of his theories, John Calvin, by dialectics, by excommunication, by sword, by fire and by torture, drove his way through all opposition to his appointed end. When he died, the theocracy which he had devised was paramount in Geneva. If the God who ruled that city had little resemblance to the conceptions of the Divinity held by other Christians, he bore a remarkable likeness to the personality of the prophet who had talked with him on the slopes of an Alpine Sinai. Geneva may have been what John Knox, creature of similar temper, but of more sophistic brain than his master, called it—"the most perfect school of Christ that was ever on earth since the days of the Apostles." Others,

less self-righteous than the wizard who cast irremovable gloom upon the country of Scotland, might have compared it to Abaddon itself.

At the death of Henry VIII, Calvin had almost reached his final unassailable position of tyrant over the bodies and souls of the inhabitants of Geneva. The root of his doctrine was firmly planted in the idea of the divine inspiration of the Bible, and in the Bible alone, and no fundamentalist has ever been more rigid in his acceptance of its words. Every idea that arose from outside that pure source, was the invention of man, and therefore suspect of error. The traditions of the Church were worse than old wives' fables; they were definite lapses from the pathway of the true Christian. When, on the accusation of Arianism, he was asked by Caroli if he accepted the three creeds, the Apostles', the Nicene, the Athanasian, Calvin replied contemptuously: "we swear in the faith of one God, not of Athanasius, whose creed no true church would ever have approved." The only creed which he would accept, was the one prepared by himself and Farel. It was therefore quite logical that he should resist the smallest movement which might threaten the cornerstone of his position. When Sebastian Castellio hinted doubts of the divine inspiration of the Song of Solomon, Calvin thrust him from his cure and drove him into exile. For the rest of his life, he pursued his critic with an evil and typically inhuman rancour. When Servetus was burned at Calvin's instigation, and Castellio once more, from his miserable and poverty-stricken retreat, dared to defend liberty of thought, Calvin replied with thunders of abuse, calling his one time disciple a monster full of poison and madness, and accusing him of introducing innovations—a strange charge, as Castellio pointed out, from one who

had introduced more innovations in ten years than the entire Church had introduced in six centuries.

It is rarely given to fanatics to be endowed with logical consistency and obstinacy, and at the same time to have opportunity upon opportunity thrust into their hand. Calvin had all. His local enemies were for the most part men of straw. His few strong opponents stayed outside his boundaries: they knew too well what to expect to venture their heads in Geneva. But none of them possessed a tittle of the constructive ability which placed Calvin far above them, as leader and a strategist. He can never be described as self-complacent; his intellect was far too clean for any easy acceptance of his own qualities. He had hammered out his beliefs in the bitter days of his apprenticeship, and fortified them with the resources of dialectic. He knew in his own mind, from reasoned conviction, that he was the chosen servant of God, and that—without presumption—he was as necessary to God as God was to him. It was as God's mouthpiece that on his return to Geneva in 1541, he set about codifying those rules of godly discipline, which even in their own day seemed painted with an extravagant gloom and cruelty.

In the first place, his ordinances gave into the keeping of the Consistory not only the public but also the private lives of all citizens. No man was too high for the inquisition of the members, no peccadillo too trivial for their reprobation. Their censures fell with equal weight upon the heretic, the blasphemer, and the wearer of slashed hose. The possession of an *Amadis de Gaule* or a *Golden Legend* was visited with pains and penalties. The making of a chalice was idolatry; the repeating of a charm, paganism; the mutter of *requiescat in pace* stank of superstition. To criticize the enforcement of the death penalty

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
SYDENHAM
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for those who did not accept Genevan doctrine, or to sing a song derogatory to Calvin bordered on blasphemy. The most privy details of domestic life were extracted and examined by the ecclesiastical courts. Taverns were suppressed, and five rest-houses opened by the brethren in their place, where neither food nor drink were served to any guest who refused to say a grace. Idolatrous names, such as those of saints in the Roman calendar, were forbidden. Dancing was put down, and the most innocent of games. Clothing was regulated to a decent sobriety. Theatrical displays, even mysteries, were denounced.

The discipline was enforced with all the usual ingenuity and thoroughness of mediæval cruelty. Fines and imprisonment were the lot of the lightest offenders: exile or death that of the heavier. Torture was freely employed in the search for evidence. A small child who struck its parents was beheaded. Calvin may not, as some say, have been a cruel man; but he was pitiless in the stringency with which his laws should be executed. To have shown mercy would have been the denial of the Jehovah he worshipped. To have spared champions of doctrines other than his own would have weakened his position. To the critics of Genevan doctrine and administration, not Elijah, when he slew the prophets of Baal by the brook Kishon, was more vindictive than the masterful prophet of Geneva. The torture and death of Gruet, the exile and hatred of Castellio, the burning of Servetus, are only the upmost thrusting pinnacles of the ruthless determination to establish and uphold the Institutes as "the holy doctrine of God." No Pope ever exercised over the carnal and spiritual lives of his flock so absolute, so intolerant a tyranny as John Calvin did over those of the citizens of

Geneva. In a different sense, he echoed the words of Christ: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." The deity of Calvin's conception was the Jehovah of the Hebrews, "whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God," "a consuming Fire."

Though Calvin's theories of predestination and his conception of the Sacraments were both to play some part in the history of the English Church, it is as much to the impact of his ethical teachings on everyday material life that the Puritan revolution is due. The sudden outburst of economic expansion during the sixteenth century had made the problems of economic moralists infinitely more puzzling. It had been an axiom of the Middle Ages that the profits of an enterprise were rightfully the reward of the man whose brains and muscles had effected its success, and that the financier of the undertaking was entitled to no more than a very small share over and above the principal involved. The problem now arose of controlling activities which were very obviously the inversion of this axiom? When gold became a river, flowing round the world in an endless stream, breaking through the boundaries of states, countries, parishes, disappearing and reappearing, how could it be turned in its course, and be harnessed to the benefit of the world? That the moral problem still exercised the minds of society is exemplified by the action of the Spanish money-dealers in sending a delegate to the Sorbonne to take the opinion of that authority on the theological point of view towards their trade. (7) The age-long belief that the Church should exercise a moral *imperium* over all social and commercial activities was held as tenaciously by the reformers as it had been held by the companions of Ananias and Sapphira. Church civilization should be paramount in every depart-

ment of life: and it was still the province of the new churches to define their attitude towards and to attempt the solution of the problem of usury. The answers given by the two great figures of the Reformation, Luther and Calvin, plot the abyss which lies between them. Luther, the mystic, denounced the "traffic in interest" with all the burning eloquence at his command: "the devil invented it, and the Pope, by giving it his sanction, has done untold evil in the world." But Luther, still mediæval in outlook, renegade child of the Church of Rome, conservative in his acceptance of secular authority, was merely reiterating the centuries old words of the Church. He could only dream of a past, which had in fact never existed, when the maxim of "love thy neighbour as thyself" had, so he thought, done duty for bishop's court, judge's assize and constable. He as well might have tried to drag a wolf from its prey with bare hands as to persuade the Fuggers and Welsers to forgo their trade. The pious aspirations of Luther woke as little response in the ears of the matter-of-fact world as the motets of Palestrina do in the ears of a saxophone player.

Far otherwise was the attitude of Calvin, the modern. To his practical mind, fully abreast of his own times, it was a problem, not to be solved by hope, but to be firmly grasped, debated and decided. Urban by upbringing, he never regarded commercial life from the peasant standpoint of the older reformer. He recognized that capital and credit were as necessary to the fostering of the life of the town as fair weather to that of the country; and that in themselves they were no worse than the sun's rays. His reason led him inevitably to the view that a moderate return upon money was *pari passu* with a moderate return upon the letting of land; and that to lend money upon

interest was not in itself a sin. The fact that he recognized money-lending at all was seized upon by his enemies as evidence of moral laxity: but such usury as Calvin in fact permitted in the City of Saints could hardly be described as a wantonly profitable profession. The iron discipline which forbade games of bowls and frowned upon romances, was not likely to soften its rigidity in favour of the speculations of so un-Christian a trade. All that had occurred was that Calvin had arrived at the conclusion that every commercial activity, properly regulated according to his ethical standards, was merely a branch of industry; and industry, coupled with prayer, as he well knew, bred a discipline to weld together the armies of God. It was therefore no relaxation which Calvin permitted, but, on the contrary, the strengthening of the rules of conduct. The industrial as much as the social life of the city was brought under the penetrating gaze of the Council and the ministry. In the dock, beside the lecher, the derider of Calvin and the reader of light books, stood the profiteer, the taker of unlawful interest, the giver of short measure, and all the other tricksters of commercial life, to be harried by the ruthless purifiers of society. While the honest citizen who loaned his money to some mercantile enterprise was encouraged, the exploiter of his neighbour's misfortune received execration of a Mosaic ferocity. In the City of Saints, one can almost see the first opening of the gulf that stretches to-day between the Rothschilds and the 'old masters' of Jermyn Street.

Not that Calvin regarded the capitalist with an indulgent eye. He still held, and in his private life exemplified the prayer of Solomon: "Remove me from vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food

convenient for me." But at the same time, he had little patience with poverty, which he believed to be the outcome of thriftlessness and debauchery. Realizing the lusty energy of mankind, he strove to turn it and canalize it into the service of God. What he did not perceive was, that in his logical advance towards the perfect state of God, he was taking the first step towards authorizing the sanctification of the capitalism which he distrusted. In his authorization, lay the seed of the Reformed Churches' undoing. By blessing one strong appetite, he increased its hunger. The virtues of work and prayer are self-evident: but they are a ticklish team to drive in harness. When prayer lags, there is trouble. Calvin by his practical sense, by his grasp of realities, by his constant tyranny kept both necks in the collar. The brethren in other lands saw and admired. They borrowed somewhat similar teams from the same stable. But their roads were less easy, their skill less practised; and in due time, they found it easier to drive one animal at a time. In their failure to drive their team lies the failure of all that Calvinism implies.

(iv)

It would seem paradoxical to suggest that from Calvin sprang a greater revolution than from Jesus Christ; yet, like all paradoxes, the suggestion has a grain of truth. It was after centuries of warfare, when Constantine elected for Christianity, that the Christian Church became properly established: but it did so at a price, and only by a certain coming to terms with paganism. At one point in the history of the western world, it was touch and go whether Mithras or Christ would triumph. Christianity

won, but not wholly on its own terms. Only by grafting its own ideas on to the pagan myths and rituals, myths and rituals which have had their roots in man's life from Pekin to Connemara centuries before the coming of Christ, did the Christian Church succeed in cloaking but not altogether obscuring their original symbolism. The cup, the lance and the sword were invested with a Christian significance, but they remained what they had always been, part of the insignia of life-worship. The fear of the disclosure of these symbols, of the reawakening of some worship not founded on the doctrines of the Church, gave to mediæval ecclesiastics that sense of insecurity which displays itself in some of the most terrible and in these days almost unintelligible persecutions. The massacre of the Albigenses, the suppression of the Templars, even the judicial execution of Joan of Arc, those stains of apparently stupid, selfish butchery upon the tapestry of the past, were carried out, not from vindictiveness, not from personal, avaricious or even secular motives, but because the victims had relapsed, or were thought to have relapsed to some older faith, still active, though driven underground, some faith, brought maybe from the East, from Tyre and Sidon, or lingering on in the woods, marshes and unpeopled places, which might one day leap up with renewed vigour and sweep over Christendom. Hence so long as these pagan deities recognized themselves as devils, and the nymphs and satyrs disguised themselves as " the good folk " and Robin Goodfellow, the Church was willing to let the compromise stand, and to permit the ancient rituals, disguised, have a part in the worship of Christians.

It is not improbably the understanding of this acquiescence that lies at the back of Calvin's and the other

reformers' unquenchable enmity to ritual, or, as they would, quite reasonably, call it, to idolatry. To cover, to conceal beneath the garments of the saints, the bodies of Adonis, Mithras, or whatever pagan deity it might be, was to make terms with Satan. To compromise and make treaty with the ancient practices meant to Calvin disreputable weakness. The war must be carried on *à outrance*. The Church had completed but half of its task. Calvin would finish it. This would be the last cog of the revolution, which had been fifteen centuries in completing its wheel, and the final victory for Jehovah.

The mediæval Church, facing reality, had been wiser than Calvin. Its servants knew in their hearts that man is rooted in tradition, that worship once given is not lightly set aside, and that there ever remains in the worshippers some spirit of the soil, some link with the gods that spring from it. They knew too that with the completion of the revolution there would be born the seeds of their own organic disintegration. So they had been acute enough, while adopting, moulding, translating these traditions, to preserve them; and they saw in Calvin, not the reformer, but the Great Beast itself, whose coming foretells the doom of the world.

For the visible, tangible world holds some part of the worship of nine-tenths of humanity. The tenth part, of which was Calvin, can live on the strength they breed of themselves, a strength denied to weaker spirits. The mediæval Church, which knew a great deal about human nature, was content to make allowances and to wait. Calvin with his doctrine of predestination, had no mercy for the weak. All men unless elect, were damned from the cradle. His was not the temperament to coax, or to win souls by fostering the earthly enthusiasms of their

minds. If men could not achieve his vision of God, if they could not arrive at his consistency, they were condemned to his Hell. By the very rigidity of his attitude, he was bound, in the long run, to fail.

(v)

The battle, which is joined with the coming of the Reformation into England in the middle of the sixteenth century and only reaches its climax with the victory of Cromwell's Ironsides at Naseby, is the battle of two creeds; but it arrays on either side a number of enemies, some of whose battles are even yet not decided. It is the battle of the Church for domination in all matters touching the moral life of man. It is the battle of the owner of property for the right to do what he will with his own. It is the battle of the cultivator against the encroachments of industrial life; of the urban against the peasant. It is the battle of humanism against obscurantism. It is the last stand of authority against individualism.

The dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 and of the chantries and chapels in 1547 was followed by an outburst of speculation which was to have no replica until the years of the South Sea Bubble. The gambling in land was as wild as are the shilling share gambles of modern financiers. A new class of landholder sprang up, men no longer interested in land except so far as it could be exploited to further the manufacturing trades. The establishment of the cloth industry as an export business enlarged the scope of the wool industry. The expansion increased the demand for wool. Sheep-breeding became the means to rapid fortune. The old system of arable land was displaced. The plough fell into disuse. More and more

tillage was allowed to lie fallow. The big estates worked by the forced labour of the villeins gave way to the smaller farm worked by a new class of farmer. The labourers, expropriated from their small holdings, became a landless shifting class in greater danger of man than they had before been of nature.

" Lament, lament, old abbies,
The fairies lost command;
They did but change priests' babies,
But some have chang'd your land:
And all your children sprung from thence
Are now growne Puritanes;
Who live as changelings ever since,
For love of your demaines." (8)

By the time Edward VI under the protectorship of Somerset was brought to the throne, the country people were in a ferment of discontent.

At this date, the strength of the reforming party in England may be said to lie among those who had made profits by the Dissolution. The reformed Church itself (that is, the Church as politically but not doctrinally reformed by Henry VIII) was not inclined to go very far in the direction of Calvin. " The fantastic folk who would put all in confusion under pretence of the Gospels," Calvin wrote to Somerset, " will deserve to be repressed by the sword which is entrusted to you." Somerset, too large-minded to wield the sword with the thoroughness and single-minded efficacy advised by Geneva, fell from power. His place was taken by that " most holy and fearless instrument of the word of God," Warwick, later Duke of Northumberland. If he too failed to close the mouths of the meddlesome churchmen, he succeeded in

lessening the volume of criticism and protest by the destruction of the grammar schools and the replacement of canon law as a subject in the universities by the study of Greek and Latin.

To those who had looked for a spiritual regeneration after the expulsion of Papal authority and the establishment of moral law by the new régime, the achievements of such enthusiastic instruments as Warwick brought the full cup of bitterness. Not, maybe, to Cranmer, immersed in the business of church government and the preparation of the new Book of Common Prayer. But to the group of which Latimer was the driving force, this predatory revolution was a thing of horror. It was worse than in the old days of the fat abbeys. " They abhor the names of monks, friars, canons, nuns, etc., but their goods they greedily gripe. And yet where the cloisters kept hospitality, let out their farms at a reasonable price, nourished schools, brought up youth in good letters, they do none of all these things." (9)

The ' Commonwealth ' group, as Latimer and his adherents were named, got a Royal Commission appointed to oversee the enforcements of the acts against depopulation, enclosures, and the putting down of arable land. But they were fighting, though they knew it not, a battle which was lost before the first exchange. The temper of the offenders was all the higher because they felt that they were on the winning side. " ' Restitution,' quoth some, ' what should he preach of restitution? Let him preach of contrition,' quoth they, ' and let restitution alone; we can never make restitution.' " (10) The new economic movement was by its size both imperceptible and invisible. The rating and punishing of individual offenders might continue, but the movement of which they were but

straws on the tide was running too fast to be stayed. The landowning class was wholly resolute upon the rights of property. The rewards of the spoliation were held fast by the landowner, and whoever might be paramount in England, nor Pope, nor Church, nor Devil, would make him let go. Indeed, so zealous were the reformed laity upon their share of the good work that, under Mary, they were quite ready to sweep away the whole of Cranmer's work upon the Prayer Books, the Liturgy and the Sacraments, and to annul the whole of Henry VIII's anti-papal legislation, provided always that their rights as holders of abbey lands were secured to them. All that resulted from the Church's interference was that, as the defender of the commonweal against the assault of the individualist, it made itself conspicuous as the most formidable enemy to the follower of the new economic practices. As the latter stretched out his hand to seize his reward, he was ever being thwarted by this meddlesome pillar of the State. It was not until some fifty years later that the tools now being forged in Geneva by Calvin and his disciples, would be ready for the final silencing of this railing enemy.

Side by side with the commercial revolution, less conspicuously the revolution in religion was slowly coming to life. At the death of Henry VIII, except for the acknowledgement of the King's supremacy as head of the English Church, *vice* the Pope's, little change had in fact taken place in the minds of the English people. In belief they were still untouched by continental Protestantism. It is doubtful if the publication of the two Prayer Books, and the First Act of Uniformity of 1549, did more than make ready the kindling for the flame; and their sweeping away during the Marian persecutions left the situation of the

Church, on the accession of Elizabeth, little advanced from the position it had held at the beginning of the previous decade. But the seventy years which follow 1558 are the most splendid and the noblest in the history of the Church of England. The years that see the rise of this island kingdom to the status of a power are identified with that line of great archbishops which begins with Parker and ends with Laud.

The two Elizabethan Acts of Uniformity and Supremacy definitely threw the English Church on to the side of the reformed religions: but on the other hand, the Church of the Elizabethan settlement was built peculiarly for English needs. It had broken with the Church of Rome, but it had not followed Calvin into the wilderness. Even had its leaders desired to do so, it is doubtful if they could have persuaded the people to follow them; there is a world of difference between a small and coercible city of fifteen thousand souls like Geneva and a broad and widely populated realm. The Book of Common Prayer of 1552, the first vernacular prayer book, was drawn by Cranmer from various sources after prolonged study of historical liturgy; and so on its presentation it was neither Lutheran, nor Zwinglian, nor Calvinist. As is usual with a compromise, it satisfied nobody in particular; yet as Protestant teaching gradually developed, the majority of the nation found—as Calvin did when he read it—that with the exception of certain " endurable trifles," the Book of Common Prayer satisfied their needs. Though toleration of religious opinion was still beyond the wildest dreams of humanists, the country during the early days of Elizabeth's reign was content to jog along very placidly in its new allegiance. The Church of England was a State church, but not a persecuting church: and its temporal

head was at once too busy and too agnostically realist to care very much about doctrine, provided her subjects were tractable.

Unhappily the compromise church, like all institutions founded upon common sense, in time became the butt of reformers from both sides. With the extravagances of the Roman Catholic fanatics, the missions of the Jesuits and seminarists, the Bull of Excommunication against Elizabeth, the plots and the various statutes against the old religion, culminating in the act of 1593 against Popish Recusants, we are not occupied. It is sufficient to indicate that the activities of the Papal emissaries and the war with Spain warned all good Englishmen that the term Papist was synonymous with traitor, and that any retrogression of the Church Romewards in the matter of ritual was a movement of doubtful patriotism, inevitably tending to a revival of ' idle superstitions ' and of the persecutions of 1555–1558, of which they had sufficient contemporary examples in the butchery of the Low Countries and the blood shed in Paris on St Bartholomew's day.

On the other hand, from the left wing of Protestantism, there was more coherent, and, generally speaking, more vociferous opposition. Before the reign of Elizabeth, the influence of the continental reformers had been little felt and had had no effect on their English brethren. Though the men who sought in England refuge from the continental persecutions during the reign of Edward VI did not hesitate to voice their criticisms of their Laodicean hosts, they had not succeeded in awakening any enthusiasm for the root and branch thoroughness of the Switzers. Six years later, the Marian persecutions in England sent them drifting back to Europe along with the converts they had succeeded in winning. The comparative religious

freedom of the early days of Elizabeth's reign brought back the fugitives, Geneva-trained, and strong in the godly discipline of Calvin's church. When they came back, they found that under the series of contending persecutions, many cures had fallen vacant of incumbents and that there was a dearth of clergy to fill them. So they were not unwelcome: and gradually new blood and new ideas were infused into the body of the Church of England.

The new ideas were not long in incubation. The criticism of the reformers soon made itself heard. At first their grievances were directed against those points of ceremonial and ritual which Calvin had flung aside. They objected to many things, to vestments, to genuflection (termed ' kneeling and knocking '), to wedding rings, to the number of holy days, to music and to other similar matters savouring of idolatry. " Where the service of God is grievously abused by piping with organs; singing, ringing and trowling of psalms from one side of the choir to another; with the squeaking and chanting of choristers, disguised in white surplices . . . imitating the fashion and manner of Antichrist the Pope, that man of sin and child of perdition, with his other rabble of miscreants and shavelings." (11)

The bishops listened wearily to the reformers' complaints. To them, as firmly opposed to the re-entry of the Pope into England as the most bigoted Genevan, these new contentions seemed idle and profitless. " *I* care either for cap, tippet, surplice or wafer bread? " haughtily asked Archbishop Parker. " But for the laws so established I esteem them." (12) The question of the Sacramental bread was of vital importance. Should it be wafer or common bread? The Church, as indeed the older Swiss

reformers, enjoined unleavened bread, but the new school held for the common loaf. It seemed a small point; and Parker, averse from tyranny, was content to let the minister use which seemed good to him. "Although I trust that you mean not universally in your diocese," he wrote to the Bishop of Norwich, "to command or wink at the loaf bread, but for peace and quietness, here and there to be contented therewith." (13)

Gradually the controversies took another turn. One Cartwright, Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, criticized in his lectures the constitution of the Church of England. For this overstepping of the bounds he was deprived of his doctorate. He retreated to Geneva, only to return brimming with presbyterian policy and to assault the whole hierarchical system, advocating the removal of bishops and election to the ministry by the congregation. No theory was too outrageous for Cartwright; in an age prone to the strong waters of objurgation, no language too violent, and no disagreement with his views less than heresy. "I have desired," said Elizabeth, "to have the obedience of my subjects by love, not by compulsion." "Heretics," screamed Cartwright, "ought to be put to death now. If this be bloody and extreme, I am contented to be so counted with the Holy Ghost."

Cartwright and his followers, however, desired to reform the Church from within, and not to be thrust out. Though in the end they seceded, their conventicle gained few adherents. But out of his teachings, there grew up in the eastern counties a sect, to be known from their leader as the Brownists (and later as the Independents), which in the next century would form the *cadre* of the Puritan army. Rejecting all authority outside the con-

gregation, the sect established a community at Norwich. Censured by the Bishop, they removed in 1581 to Middleburg in Holland.

But the seeds of the enmity to the Church of England had fallen in fruitful ground. Independence in spiritual and commercial life alike thrived. To the Queen, the theories of sectarians were nothing. Herself conservative in the way of religion, and not overly enthusiastic towards dogmatism, she disliked with an equal antipathy both Papists and Puritans. In both forms of dissent, she saw, and rightly, minds intent on the refusal of authority. The Church was a buttress of the State as much as the Privy Council, and the questioning of the forms of the established faith was worse than heretical; it was treason—all the more because, since the Pope had excommunicated her, her spiritual right to the throne rested on the Church of England alone. In the appointment of Parker, Grindal and Whitgift, all of Calvinistic leanings, to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, she had inclined as far as she intended towards Protestantism. Beyond that lay mutiny; and mutiny must be repressed with a firm and pitiless hand, whatsoever the creed of the mutineer, and however pure his motives. Each estate of the realm must be supported and confirmed in authority. Tolerance to a point might be permitted in practice, but the scattering abroad of new doctrines must be rigidly restrained.

The attitude of the Queen was further strengthened by the matter of 'prophesying,' in other words, preaching. Prophesying had always been of the highest importance in the Genevan plan, as a means to the study of the scriptures. In the old days, the priests and ministers had often been too ignorant to expound: but with the entry of the new blood, preaching and exhortation had become

extremely popular: " so," says Harrison, " it is a notable spur unto all ministers, thereby to apply their books, which otherwise (as in times past) would give themselves to hawking, hunting, tables, cards, dice, tippling at the alehouse, shooting and like vanities." (14) But it was also a notable spur to the critics of church government. " We hear," said the Queen in her general letter of 1577, " to our great grief that in sundry parts of our realm there are no small number of persons, presuming to be teachers and preachers of the Church though neither lawfully thereunto called nor yet fit for the same which . . . do daily, devise, imagine, propound and put into execution sundry new rites and forms in the Church, as well as by their preaching, reading. . . ." (15) The licences to preach were for a time withdrawn from the extremists, and this was repeated by Whitgift, himself of Genevan leanings. The Marprelate Tracts revived the controversy. Many laughed at this scurrilous pamphleteer: but " our L. Bishops with the rest of that swinish rabble . . . petty Antichrists, petty popes, proud prelates, intolerable withstanders of reformation, enemies of the gospel and most covetous wretched priests " resented the criticisms. Parliament came to the conclusion that the new prophets had gone too far. The repression of the Puritans became as thorough as the repression of the Catholics.

It is doubtful if the country as a whole cared a rush what the form of its religion might be: but it did certainly dislike the stopping of its sermons. The church was the centre of each small community; and the Elizabethans gathered in the church as much for the pleasure of controversy as for the worship of God. The fulminations of the minister were as much meat and drink to them as a dog fight or a bull baiting, and they resented the deprival

of their pleasures. Thus to a certain extent the plain man was drawn into the company of other worthy persons, less bent perhaps on amusement or on religion, but very ready to pick a crow with the Church, the Bishops, and their "filthy Canon Law."

CHAPTER FOUR

The transformation of the court of Elizabeth into the court of James is at first difficult to distinguish. The same splendour is there, rarer if anything, the same figures, more gorgeous perhaps. Raleigh, Cecil, Bacon, Howard stand near the throne, with others as brave. Yet something distorting has crept into the picture. The gentlemen seem a trifle frayed, as it were, a little tawdry. Then one realizes that it is the centre of the picture which has changed; and in the place of the vital figure of the painted old harridan, who was England, there sprawls the carcase of the mean-spirited alien,

> " In quilted doublet and great trunk breeches,
> Who held in abhorrence tobacco and witches."

Of all the kings who have occupied the throne of England, none have excelled King James I in the matter of vulgarity. Even the First Gentleman of Europe could not beat him there. But while vulgarity is the dominant of the court during the lamentable years 1603–1625, it is also the forcing time of the Puritan and commercial spirit of the country. The extravagance and almost bankrupt state of the monarchy is a dismal contrast to the expansion of English trade under conditions of peace, and the growth of the efficient virtues of Puritanism.

Only a shred of the Tudors' mantle had fallen on King

James, but his kingdom was fraught with all the machinery of their personal government. The machine had worked well under a series of capable and sometimes economical monarchs. But James was not competent to drive it, and with changing times, it badly needed overhaul and adjustment. The new forces of Calvinism and commerce had already begun to swell during the last years of Elizabeth. They had been checked and contained as much by the personal popularity of the Queen as by the capacity of the Cecils. But towards James, as a foreigner, the new spirit in industry and religion felt bound by no allegiance; and James himself, given to the acquisition of learning, to the bottle and to less mentionable vices, was not the king to command it. Where his predecessor (whom he shovelled into the grave with as little ceremony and expense as was decently possible) was stingy to an almost morbid degree, he and his queen were recklessly extravagant. James had little taste and perhaps as little discretion. The few well sighted ideas which he possessed, were unsuitable to the time and to the temper of his people. He talked of one united nation of English and Scot: the English would not have it. He talked of one united church of England and Scotland, and succeeded in forcing episcopacy upon the latter: episcopacy failed to thrive, and Presbyterianism boiled in indignation. He might have tolerated every shade of religious conviction; not Puritan, nor Churchman, nor Papist would accept such latitude. Even the Stuart insistence on "Divine Right" had its tactical justification. There was a necessary and almost conclusive case for the sanctification of the King's prerogative. Granted in each case a series of arguable premises, no better and no worse than the next, it was possible to prove any one of three or four candidates

the *de jure* successor of Elizabeth, which in its turn lent a pretty sanctification to the assassin's dagger, gunpowder or what not. The claims of the *de facto* monarch, James saw, must be sanctioned by something of superhuman importance; but only James could have expressed it in that mistily elaborate phrase, "the Divine Right," and hardly comprehend the implications the phrase had for a hard-headed, hard-mouthed House of Commons.

In a period when a country stands in the extremity of danger from its neighbours, the concentration on this aspect of life drives out less important matters. The Spanish Wars and the threats of invasion, which had hung low over Elizabeth's reign, had caused an almost unconscious rallying to the Crown. Men were inclined to overlook the powers with which the Crown and the Privy Council, the—in effect—corresponding body to the modern cabinet, were gradually investing themselves, in much the same way that a large amount of power became concentrated in the executive during the war of 1914–1918. With the defeat of Spain and the gradual dispersal of the war cloud, the members of the House of Commons lifted their heads and began to look eagerly about for occasions to reassert their rights. This bolder spirit of the House had already made itself felt during the last years of Elizabeth. Under James, it was to prove itself more obdurately self-assertive.

James was poor. He was also spendthrift with the profusion and the prodigality which marks the parvenu. The advancement of the extravagant Hay to the viscounty of Doncaster, and the profligate Carr to the earldom of Somerset, Scottish adventurers with nothing to commend them but the beauty and elegance of their bodies, exhausted the exchequer by larger draughts than did the Irish

troubles. Masques in which Inigo Jones and Ben Jonson in rivalry ransacked the treasure-houses of their imaginations, were presented by King, Queen and princes with an opulence hitherto unimagined: the expenditure of the equivalent of several thousand pounds on one such revel did not hinder the production of another no less splendid within a few weeks. In the words of Mrs Hutchinson, and she speaks for all Puritanism, "The court of the King was a nursery of lust and intemperance; he had brought in with him a company of poor Scots, who coming into this plentiful kingdom, were surfeited with riot and debaucheries, and got all the riches of the land only to cast away. The honour, wealth and glory of the nation, wherein Queen Elizabeth left it, were soon prodigally wasted by this thriftless heir; and the nobility of the land was utterly debased by setting honours to public sale, and conferring them on persons that had neither blood nor merit fit to wear, nor estates to bear up their titles, but were fain to invent projects to pill the people and pick their purses for the maintenance of vice and lewdness. The generality of the gentry of the land soon learned the court fashion, and every great house in the country became a sty of uncleanness. To keep the people in their deplorable security, till vengeance overtook them, they were entertained with masks, stage plays, and various sorts of ruder sports. Then began murder, incest, adultery, drunkenness, swearing, fornication, and all sorts of ribaldry, to be no concealed but countenanced vices, because they held such conformity with the court example." (1) In the course of such exploits, James became harder and harder put to it for money. Hitherto the subsidies demanded of Parliament had only been for matters of extraordinary expenditure in emergency. But

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now the King was arriving with his hat outstretched almost as a matter of course. It gave the members of the House a strong handle against the monarchy. They used it to vent their ecclesiastical grievances, and to demand their redress. The temper of the middle classes was rising and there was no power in a sawny, impoverished king to allay it.

The change which comes over England between the death of Elizabeth and the revolution of 1689 is as definite, though not as tangible, as the Industrial Revolution. But in the case of the seventeenth century, the revolution, the actual turn-over itself, is more complete and more complex in its movement. The Industrial Revolution changed the face of England; but it was the natural result of all that had gone before. It scarcely affected the mental attitude of the nation; it had been well heralded and, in its simplest form, well understood. Save for the swift planting of the vile huddles of graceless towns, such as Middlesbrough, it was not a revolution. The revolution of the seventeenth century is more subtle and more thorough because it affected the mind of the nation, giving it a twist, setting it marching in a different direction to that in which it had been going.

That the change is due to the growth and diffusion of what is called Puritanism—in the general and not the particular sense—is unquestioned. How it came and what it actually was, are questions less easy to answer. Whatever may be our idea of a Puritan to-day, whether we see him in the shape of a Chadband, a Grundy, or a recent English Home Secretary, the idea which these figures evoke is certainly not the idea that gave the original Puritans their name. The purity required of the seventeenth century Puritans was primarily concerned with

their system of religion. Puritanism, except in individual cases, had never been connected with the asceticism of, say, a St Francis. The purity was in their manner of worship. Precisian, their alternative nickname, later dropped, is actually the juster form of title: for precision, or niceness in the outward forms of religion, was their reason for existence. The association of their name with the dubious virtuousness, usually connected with them, is of later growth.

The birth and increase of Puritanism is a problem difficult to disentangle and reduce to its lowest factors. The ground was prepared when Henry VIII suppressed the monasteries and declared himself head of the Church of England. To the divorce from Rome, engineered by Henry, was added the hatred and the fear of Rome bred in the disturbed reign of Mary, and in no way soothed by the Wars of Religion in France, the massacres of St Bartholomew, the Armada, or the threatened assassination of Elizabeth. By the end of the sixteenth century, the fear of Rome had eaten as deeply into the minds of the English as acid into metal; and under it they began to particularize, to find any relic of the old ways, any garishness of ritual, suspicious, and under the tutelage of the protestant ministers educated in Germany, Switzerland or the Low Countries, to confound it with the doctrines and practice of Rome. If the English did not welcome the Calvinists, they began at least to regard them with less disfavour, since they, too, were declared enemies of the power they feared.

Even so Calvinism might have died, but for the situation in England at the beginning of James's reign. Reaching England at the time when the new energetic spirit in industry and commerce was constantly reminding those

possessed by it of the value of liberty, Calvinism expressed to them something beyond the formalism of the Church of England: in its enmity to Rome, they saw a potential ally. And in the appeal of Calvinism to conscience rather than to doctrine, they perceived something which appealed also to the liberty of the individual.

That the tenets of Calvinism should find their readiest sponsors among the commercial classes is easily comprehensible. Calvinism had come into bloom in an urban society, a society not of landowners but of industrialists. It was conceived and given life by the special requirements of the trading classes. Calvin, while he had little lenience for the chicanery of trade, had looked on industry with a kindly eye. He had seen in it the virtues that his creed required in daily life, labour, application, thrift. It was the part of man to labour for the commonweal, and industry was not only a safe outlet for man's energy, but was also pleasing to God. Calvin alone among religious leaders had accepted profit-making as vital to industry's existence. He alone had admitted that success in business was not of necessity unchristian. His cautious dictum that moderate interest on loans, in certain special cases, was permissible, drew to him the communities which thrived on buying and selling and profit-making. But all profit, in Calvin's eye, was owed to the improvement of the commonwealth and to the service of God. In a small city such as Geneva, with an active ministry, Calvin, and after his death, Beza, had been able to keep this ideal always before the eyes of the citizens. In a large country such as England, where each district had different requirements, such an ideal was utterly impracticable. But his doctrines had their deserved success, and a number of thriving industrialists found his novel principles more congenial

than those of a Church which still regarded their activities with a distrustful eye.

In the meantime, there was still the Church of England to be dealt with. Though it did not offer liberty of religious thought, its ark had been designed to accommodate, so far as its authors could see, every species of worshipper in its capacious hold; or, at least, every species which would deny the Pope and acknowledge the Bishops. As Sir Thomas Browne has it: "There is no Church whose every part so squares unto my conscience, whose articles, constitutions and customs seem so consonant unto reason, and as it were framed to my particular devotion, as this whereof I hold my belief, the Church of England, to whose faith I am a sworn subject, and therefore in a double obligation, subscribe unto her articles, and endeavour to observe her constitutions: whatsoever is beyond, as points indifferent, I observe according to the rules of my private reason or to the humour and fashion of my devotion, neither believing this, because Luther affirmed it, or disproving that, because Calvin hath disavouched it. I condemn not all things in the Council of Trent, nor approve all in the Synod of Dort. In brief, where the Scripture is silent, the Church is my text; where that speaks, 'tis but my comment; where there is a joint silence of both, I borrow not the rules of my religion from Rome or Geneva, but the dictates of my own reason. It is an unusual scandal of our adversaries, and a gross error in ourselves to compute the nativity of our religion from Henry VIII, who though he rejected the Pope refused not the faith of Rome, and effected no more than what his own predecessors desired and assayed in ages past, and was conceived the state of Venice would have attempted in our days. It is as uncharitable a point in

us to fall upon those popular scurrilities, and opprobrious scoffs of the Bishop of Rome, whom as a temporal Prince we owe the duty of good language: I confess there is cause of passion between us; by his sentence I stand excommunicated, heretic is the best language he affords me; yet can no ear witness I ever returned to him the name of Antichrist, Man of Sin, or whore of Babylon. It is a method of charity to suffer without reaction; those usual satires and invectives of the pulpit may perchance produce a good effect on the vulgar, whose ears are opener to rhetoric than to logic, yet do they in no wise confirm the faith of wiser believers, who know that a good cause needs not to be patroned by a passion, but can sustain itself upon a temperate dispute." (2) The Church believed it had made its constitution as capacious as was possible in an age in which toleration of religious thought was an idea both blasphemous and dangerous. The Church as a buttress of the monarchy, in a generation which could still recall the Spanish fury at Antwerp and was to see the Thirty Years War, could go no further than it had already gone. Perhaps toleration might have come (James, bating the Divine Right of Kings, was no bigot), but for the engineers of the Bye, the Main and the Gunpowder Plots. After that there could be only one way with Catholic recusants.

Puritanism still dwelled within the Church, conforming but critical. With the exception of the sectaries it had always been there. The plots and the fear of Spain were bringing it more adherents. In its own eyes, it was the shield and armour of Protestantism. In answer to each religious gesture of Spain—gestures which had also a political significance—it was of necessity bound to make a counter-gesture in the opposite direction. In reply to

each Papal blast, a new thunder must be borrowed from Geneva. It could not play a passive part. Hence arose that long array of controversial points which lend to the Civil War the bright tints of pure religion, and obscure the sombre background of more material ambitions.

The ecclesiastical reformers were still in the minority. They had not yet formed that union with the commercial classes, which would prove so strong an alliance to the advantage of both. They were still the despised saints of whom Cromwell would speak so fervently when they had conquered. They were still the mockery of the stage, the butt of light fancy, which saw in them merely figures of fun, and not the as yet unassembled parts of the terrible engine that was building for its destruction. "All that crossed the views of the needy courtiers, the proud encroaching priests, the thievish projectors, the lewd nobility and gentry—whoever was zealous for God's glory and worship, could not endure blasphemous oaths, ribald conversation, profane scoffs, Sabbath-breaking derision of the word of God and the like—whoever could endure a sermon, modest habit, or conversation, or anything good—all these were Puritans. . . . Such a false logic did the children of darkness use to argue against the children of light, whom they branded besides as illiterate, morose, melancholy, discontented, crazed sort of men, not fit for human conversation." (3)

But they were gaining allies, some perhaps moved by less pure motives than the Puritans liked. There were men, Mrs Hutchinson, that loyal virago, tells us, who having failed to get preferment under the Church of England, joined the reformers: "others that had neither learning, nor friends, nor opportunities to arrive to any preferments, would put on a form of godliness, finding

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devout people that way so liberal to them, that they could not hope to enrich themselves in any other way. Some that had greater arts and parts, finding there was no inconsiderable gain to be made of the simple devotion of men and women, applied their wits to it, and collected great sums for the advancement of the religious interest, of which they converted much to their own private uses. . . . The Puritan party," Mrs Hutchinson adds, "being weak and oppressed, had not faith enough to disown all that adhered to them for worldly interests . . . wherefore they, in their low condition, gladly accepted any of them that would come over to them, or incline to them." (4) The craft of "shepherd" seems to have existed some centuries before Charles Dickens.

The first trial of strength came early in the reign of James at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. The differences of the Puritan members with the Church, tabled at that assembly, although they only touched the visible fringe of the controversy, were the witnesses to a deeper cleavage. The reforming party, strong in Calvinist doctrines, demanded the discontinuance of the ceremonial crossing of the child's brow at baptism, and the dispensation from confirmation, the discarding of the ring in the marriage service, the voluntary use only of the surplice, the modification of singing and music and the length of the service. To compensate the time lost to worship by shortening the service they asked for the appointment of sufficient and abler preachers. Beyond this, they touched chiefly on matters of church discipline and livings. The conference was however broken up without agreement being reached, by James, who scented Presbyterianism. James knew all about presbyteries. He had had many a verbal brawl in the kirks of his native

country with ministers, moved by the 'spreit of God' to admonish and abuse the king to his face. At the mention of the hated word, he flung out in a passion: "Stay, I pray you, for one seven years before you demand that of me; and then if you find me pursy and fat, and my wind-pipes stuffed, I will perhaps hearken with you. Then Jack and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasure censure me and my Council. . . ." (5)

Gradually the two wings of the Church drew apart into respective camps, the Puritan or Precisian, and what they were pleased to nickname Arminian, after Arminius, a Dutch theologian whose opposition to the more rigid tenets of Calvin had caused considerable disturbance at the Synod of Dort in 1614. The so-called Arminians were composed of the greater number of the senior Anglican divines, which included such men as the saintly Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, and William Laud. This party held a position midway between the extremes of Roman Catholicism and Calvinism. The chief ally of the Puritan party was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Abbot, a grim character, connected through his brother with the commercial interests of the City of London. Yet even Abbot was not prepared to go to all lengths with the Calvinists; and his temporary eclipse in 1621 and his later removal in 1627 from the Archbishopric ended his influence on the Church.

The principal points of controversy between the rival camps were so fundamental that a compromise was never to be hoped for. The Calvinists abjured ceremonial not vouched for by the Bible, and the liturgy, placing great faith in extempore prayer. The Arminians held by the rites traditionally accepted by the Church, by the Book of Common Prayer, and by the decency and reverence of

ceremonial, believing completely in the beauty of holiness. The Calvinists opposed the necessity for preaching and prophesying to the Anglican stand upon the efficacy of the Sacraments. The Calvinists stood for the grimmest Sabbatarianism; the Arminians supported " honest mirth and recreation," after the conclusion of evening prayers.

The fundamental point of doctrine on which the parties disagreed, was the acceptance or rejection of Calvin's theory of Predestination, " that terrible term which hath troubled so many weak heads to conceive and the wisest to explain," but which may be roughly defined that every action is foreordained and foreseen by God, and that save he be Elect, man is doomed from birth to eternal punishment. To the Arminian this doctrine appeared a thing of horror, a deepening of the belief in man's original sin into man's original guiltiness, and to it they opposed their own simpler, gentler theory of Free Will. Bound up with the Calvinist Predestination were other doctrinal themes, Election, Reprobation, Imputed Righteousness, the labyrinthine threads of which demand a skilled theologian to trace, points, if Izaak Walton may be followed, " such as the wisest of the common people were not fit to judge of: I am sure I am not." (6)

In the fundamental differences between the two sides can be discerned glimpses of the age-old conflict between the revolutionary and the traditionalist, between the champions of individualism and those of reason, order and authority. The latter is always at a disadvantage. He is on the defensive; he stands to be assailed. In this case, the position of the Church of England was, as is ever the case with the defender of a settled faith, far from impregnable. Yet tradition, in the eyes of the Church, was far from being the arthritic disease diagnosed by the

reformers. " For," as Laud says, " tradition is but a lane in the Church; it hath an end, not only to receive us in, but another after to let us out into more open and richer ground." (7)

Tradition is a hard thing for newcomers to understand. The Church of England was the child of the Church of Rome. The Englishmen who made it, Cranmer, Parker, Grindal, Whitgift, were men of great intelligence and cultivation of mind. By their descent from the Church of Rome, which itself had evolved over many centuries the most powerful realm in the world, the Fifth Monarchy, they inherited every necessary thing which ages of Church civilization had produced, a language, a culture and a subtlety of mind quite incomprehensible to the followers of Calvin. Everything by which the mind of man moves towards understanding had been their province, philosophy, law, literature and art. The traditional Church had been the great motive force in the history of civilization. The centre of educated humanity, this Church was fully alive to the weakness and frailty of its flock. Its members had understood with what they were dealing and had made allowance for it. It is an exaggeration to say that the Church of Rome resorted to the rack and the fire only as the last resort to save the perishing sinner's soul, and that the Church of Calvin preferred it to be damned irremediably; but the exaggeration contains a measure of truth. The Church of Rome and its Anglican child were strong to save all men; they offered a far larger raft to drowning souls than did the reformed Churches. It was as much towards this task, as towards decency and reverence, that their ceremonial was directed, a tenderness towards the incapacity of the uneducated to carry the strong wine of pure doctrine. As Laud told

the court, when charged at his trial with endeavouring "to alter and subvert God's true religion by law established . . . and to set up Popish superstition and idolatry"; "All that I have laboured for in this particular was that the external worship of God in this Church might be kept up in uniformity and decency, and in some beauty of holiness. And this the rather, because, first, I found that with the contempt of the outward worship of God, the inward fell away apace, and profaneness began boldly to show itself." (8) His defence restated the position of the Anglican Church for all time.

Meanwhile, between the two camps sat the sodden timorous King, all for peace, with his pockets empty. He had compromised that fine fortune of church lands which had come down to him from his great-great-uncle, Henry VIII, and he was over half a million in debt. But in 1614, he was not yet ready to conciliate the Commons. He summoned a parliament, and attempted to work the elections to secure a pliant House. The plan was betrayed, and the infuriated electors replied by sending as their representatives the very "Jack and Tom and Will and Dick," so much disliked of their sovereign, "more fit," it was said, "to have been among the Roaring Boys than in that assembly." The Addled Parliament sat for two months, dug their heels in and refused to grant the King a penny until their grievances had been discussed. They were dismissed.

In the six and a half years which elapsed between the dissolution of the Addled Parliament and the summoning of that of 1621, a number of matters had arisen to put the Commons on their mettle. There was, first of all, the Duke of Buckingham, "raised from a Knight's fourth son to that pitch of glory, and enjoying great possessions,

acquired by favour of the King upon no merit but his beauty and prostitution" (9), rash, reckless agent of the Crown and Lord High Admiral. Secondly, not only had the first three years of the Thirty Years War caused a general stiffening of the ranks of ultra-Protestantism, but England was unpleasantly surprised by "the noise of the taking of Prage, defeats of regiments, deaths of colonels, seizure of the castle," attendant on the flight of the King's son-in-law, the unhappy Frederick V, and his gay young bride out of the kingdom of Bohemia, where they had been so recently installed. Last, the issue of King James's *Book of Sports*, legalizing for those who had attended Sunday worship such amusements as dancing, archery, may-poles, vaulting, morris dancing and Whitsun ales, had galled the Puritan element sorely. Within a fortnight of taking their seats, a bill was introduced for the better keeping of the Sabbath, "otherwise Sunday," blatantly directed against the King's declaration. The solemnity of the occasion was however cruelly disturbed by the member for Shaftesbury, who indiscreetly ventured to pull the legs of the bill's sponsors by pointing out that the *dies Sabbati* was neither more nor less than Saturday—or else the lawyers' writs were wrong—and that the clause prohibiting dancing was obviously in defiance of the Scriptures, in so much as King David had said, "let us praise God in a dance." His levity was too much for the House. Member after member rose and rebuked the jesting Sheppard with that unquenchable flood of personality and biblical quotation, which was then the staple of oratory, until finally he was removed "from the service of this House as being unworthy thereof." The members then turned to sit in judgment on an elderly barrister, named Floyd, by circumstances an inmate of the Fleet

prison, and by profession, a Roman Catholic. He had been heard to speak of the most Protestant but throneless King and Queen of Bohemia as Goodman and Goody Palsgrave. That he was a Papist, and therefore a traitor, and had spoken treasonable words were sufficient for the members of the House. They excelled themselves in suggesting for such a dog refinements of torture, in which the whip and the smoking iron played no small parts. Finally they agreed on fining him £1000, ordering him to stand in the pillory on three separate occasions for two hours at a time, and to be carried from place to place on a bareback horse with his face towards the tail, which he was to hold in his hand. When the news of this loyal demonstration was brought to the King, James, while thanking the Commons warmly for their devotion to him and the members of his house, pointed out that they had no jurisdiction over master Floyd. Although the turbulent and pedantic Coke did his best to argue the point, there was no doubt but that the King was right. They therefore were obliged to relinquish their victim to His Majesty, who put the matter into the hands of the House of Lords: and the Lords, to vindicate their purity, promptly increased the fine to £5000, ordered the culprit to be whipped from London Bridge to Westminster and afterwards imprisoned for life. It was left to Prince Charles to save some degree of self-respect to the government by obtaining from his father the remission of Floyd's whippings.

Much refreshed by these diversions, with their zeal for regulating the kingdom in no way diminished, the Commons turned to dealing with the monopolists, and with the givers and takers of bribes. The notorious Mompesson, the monopolist of metal thread and ale-

houses, was attacked, but saved himself by flight. His creature, Sir Francis Michell, was degraded and imprisoned by the Commons with as little authority as they had possessed in the case of Floyd. Finally they presented the King with a Protestation, claiming as their fundamental right the discussion of all affairs touching the King, the State, the defence of the Realm, and the Church, and the right of members to freedom of speech and person. Then the House adjourned. It never met again. A fortnight later, the King sent for the journals of the Commons, and, beneath the eyes of the Council and the Judges, tore the offensive Protestation from the book with his own hands. A week later Parliament was dissolved. Yet for all the King's gesture, affairs were less to his liking than twenty years earlier. As he himself said, his son would have his bellyfull of Parliaments. The House of Commons was beginning to develop its strength and was finding means to entrench upon the divine rights of kings. James's last parliament, which met in 1624, was as reluctant as previous ones to fill their monarch's pockets without any compensating equivalent in control of his actions. In their hatred and distrust of the beloved Steeny, who was ruining the country, they were prepared to carry their principles to any lengths.

When Charles succeeded his father, he found himself faced by even more obdurate Houses. Puritanism, still an inchoate mass of undefined and often unrelated opinions, was not yet able to take the offensive: but it was strong enough and obstinate enough to be able to resist the encroachments of the monarchy. After three brief Parliaments, Charles perceived his inability to wear down the opposition by constitutional means. Convinced of the

sanctity of his cause, the King decided to govern in his own way by his own virtues, and, by dismissing his obnoxious Parliament, to finish them and Puritanism in one common end. King James had led his son's footsteps to the edge of the gulf. Charles's own blindness threw him into it.

CHAPTER FIVE

It was an axiom of history as taught in our schools not so long ago—it may be so still—that the eleven years' personal rule of Charles I was a period of tyranny. We were led to believe that between 1628 and 1640, it was one of the commonest practices of the Crown to cast men into prison without trial, that extortion without legality was the rule rather than the exception, that every effort was made to reintroduce Roman Catholicism, that the Ship Money was spent on frivolity, and that the country was brought nigh to ruin. It must have been a great grief to these historians, oozing the oil of liberty, that the personal lives of the tyrant and his hirelings were so completely blameless: for lack of more sprightly material, recourse had to be made to examples of the brusque arrogance of Wentworth, and to the imbecility of Laud as demonstrated by his habit of recording his dreams in his diary.

The historians of the twentieth century, less prejudiced in favour of the divine mission of the middle sort of men, have unmasked this solemn humbug; and we are now learning that the eleven years of personal rule of Charles I are remarkable in that they witnessed the only period of governmental efficiency in the century, and are no less noteworthy for the almost scrupulous personal honesty with which the leading members of the Council

fulfilled their offices; while for the matter of legality, the very means of government for which the régime has been upbraided, were in later years employed with equal ruthlessness by less efficient successors.

The two figures most intimately associated with this rule are those of Thomas Wentworth, Viscount Strafford, and William Laud, Bishop of London, and from 1633, Archbishop of Canterbury. The worst accusations which his detractors can make against Laud are his recklessness and impetuosity: he was "too full of fire." There was nothing in him of the contemplative saint, nothing of his revered master, Andrewes. The world, as Laud saw it, was awry; and in the temper of St Paul, it was his labour to right it. He stood for an ideal of theological and moral doctrine, and for that ideal he died on the scaffold. Many have died for more ignoble reasons.

"No church can be successful without coming to terms with the Devil," writes M. Elie Halévy, àpropos the arrangements which permitted Wesley and Whitefield to co-operate with industrial speculators. Laud, less realistic than the champions of Methodism, would have gone, did, in fact, go to the block rather than admit the necessity of compromise, although perhaps in his case it is doubtful whether the Devil—Puritanism—would have been less reluctant than the archbishop to come to terms. "Whatsoever the malignity of the time may put upon me," he said at his trial, "yet they which know me and my ways will easily believe that I have not so little conscience, or care of my soul, as to double with God to my very death. Nay, could I have doubled thus, I could easily have seen a way through all my difficulty; and how to have been as gracious with the people as any, even the worst, of my predecessors. But I have ever held that the lowest depth

of baseness, to frame religion to serve turns, and to be carried about with every wind of vain doctrine, to serve and please other men's fancies, and not a man's own either understanding or conscience." (1)

The strictest path of Anglicanism, midway between Rome and Geneva, was that along which Laud strode. He had viewed with repulsion the concessions made by his predecessor, the morose Abbot, to the adherents of Puritanism, and the consequent lapses in the dignity of worship. He shuddered with disgust at the base and sloven fashion into which the service of God had been permitted to slip under King James. And as soon as he had sufficient power in his hands, he set about reforming it to the last rubric permitted by the Book of Common Prayer and the canons of the Church. To Laud, order and authority were the panoply of God, and order could only be secured by what he described as uniformity, decency and the beauty of holiness. " And this the rather because first I found that with the contempt of the outer worship of God, the inward fell away apace, and profaneness began boldly to show itself. And secondly I could speak with no conscientious persons almost that were wavering in religion, but the great motive which wrought upon them to disaffect, or think meanly of the Church of England, was, that the external worship of God was so lost in the Church." (2)

To his opponents, such theories were as the roarings of the Great Beast; they were evidence of tampering with the forbidden thing. The very notion of beauty in connection with holiness savoured of idolatry, heresy, and Romanism. Æsthetics had nothing to do with theology. Their views were aptly summed up by Laud, when he said, " 'tis superstition nowadays for any man to come

with more reverence into a church than a tinker and his bitch to come into an ale-house." (3)

They were even more alarmed by the actions than by the theories of this vile prelate. The attempts to force a liturgy upon the Scots' Kirk, the re-establishment of the finances of the Church of England, the endowment of the Church of Ireland, were no less portents of an imminent return to Rome than were the consecration of the holy edifices and the cleansing and decorating of the Archbishop's private chapel in Lambeth Palace. The repair of St Paul's Cathedral much stirred the indignation of the precisian, more especially when he learned that Laud had used his powers for the summary destruction of the dwellings of many honest citizens, who had used the cathedral's fabric as the fourth wall for their own homes—and what was more outrageous, refused these honest bodies compensation. It required no long stretch of the imagination to deduce that the Primate was busy with the Queen to bring back the Jesuits and the Pope. Yet Laud, with his eyes fixed upon his distant ideal, drove straight through their opposition towards his end; the harmony of the perfect State.

For the Church was as much the bulwark of the realm as ever it had been. King, Church and Council were in his eyes as indivisible an entity as the Holy Trinity, three in one and one in three. To attempt the overthrow of each or all was equal treason. The whole structure of civilization rested on the basis of kingship, supported by Church and Council. " If the foundations be cast down, what can the righteous do? " The Church was beset by those who would throw her down. The only medicine for the times was uniformity in religion; and uniformity was administered by the hand of one who feared not the rich

nor favoured the poor. Puritanism can find few zealots narrower than this champion of the Anglican Church. He seemed, it has been said, born to make virtue odious.

In Wentworth, Laud found a more than worthy ally, though a man of very different temper. Thomas Wentworth, Lord Strafford, might almost fill Aristotle's ideal of the perfect governor; the king as opposed to the tyrant. He had sat in the Parliaments of 1614, 1621, 1624, 1625 and 1628, as a staunch opponent of the royal party. He was of such dangerous calibre that he had been carefully shelved from that of 1626 by being nominated by Charles as one of the sheriffs of Yorkshire. Throughout his parliamentary career, he had been an unyielding enemy of misgovernment. His adhesion to the anti-royal party had not been from any views in the matter of religious grievances, but from a deep contempt for the flashy parts of Buckingham. He was not a Puritan. He had been very forward in the impeachment of the favourite and in all matters relating to finance, but on the subject of religion his sympathy was wholly with the Church of England. His whole belief lay in strong government, initiated by the King. He had no feeling for the innate rightness or superiority of democratic institutions over any other. The failure of parliament after parliament to amend the situation of deadlock swelled his impatience. When Charles dismissed his third parliament, Wentworth had reached his conclusion. He no longer believed in the ability of any parliament to control events, nor did he believe in the ability of the King, supported only by a weak Council, to save the country from anarchy. He had little sympathy with the rights of democracy, nor had he much opinion of his fellow-members' theology. If his attitude may be translated into words, Wentworth understood all rights

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to be social, that they should be controlled by the State, so that the whole was a balanced arch of which the King was the keystone. Holding to this creed, he threw in his lot with Charles. A judgment of his uttered when sitting in the Star Chamber as Lord President of the North, gives the clearest statement of his point of view. "Here are some things extrajudicially to be noted, all of which difference and faction between Governors in the *medius terminus*. I find the King's duty lost in gathering: I find a Lord Deputy slandered: I find an innocent old man brought with sorrow to his grave. These are grievous things, and how other things should be expected when there is nothing but passion and anger among Councillors of State, I know not, and, if this be not removed, that people cannot be governed." (4) In these words there rings the tone of a steady passion for order and authority. To Wentworth, even more than to Laud, order and authority were the essentials to progressive rule. Experience of five Houses had given him a contempt for Westminster and the prattled opinions of his fellow members, which concluded nothing. His actions as Lord President of the North and as Lord Deputy of Ireland bring witness to his beliefs, and his words, uttered on the scaffold, "I had not any intention in my heart, but what did aim at the joint and individual prosperity of the King and his people." (5) So followed the ruthless organization of Ireland as a state. With his mind fixed firmly on what he had planned, he ignored the protests of friends and the abuse of enemies. He saw the way he must go, and, with arrogant brusqueness, neither took advice, nor sought to persuade. He induced discipline into the army. He hunted the pirates off the Irish Sea. He compelled nobles to restore the property of the Irish Church which

they had embezzled. By packed juries, he brought the whole of Connaught into the property of the Crown and planned to colonize it with Irish settlers. He re-established the Church of Ireland. He experimented with flax and proposed to set up the linen industry, "which will be the greatest enriching of the kingdom that ever befel it." He encouraged the trades in hides, tallow and cattle breeding. He attacked and ousted the gang of peculating nobles and officials, which he found in possession. In action frequently illegal, in temper merciless, he would, had he lived, have planted in Ireland a government strong enough to hold until the people were placated, and have spared both countries the horrors of sack and massacre which followed his fall.

In England the chief engines of policy were the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission, where a rude, rough and not infrequently humorous justice was measured out by the Council and Bishops. "The petition of Joan Lane," reads one report, "that her husband might be released, but it was said that he was of the same opinion and his wife the worse of the two, and the BISHOP produced the note of the Church book of their marriage to be 23rd Feb. ult., and accused her to be great with child. 'It is a timpany,' saith she. 'A timpany with 2 heels,' quoth the BISHOP OF LONDON (Laud): but her petition was not granted."

The former court dealt with a variety of matters, slander, riot, forgery and perjury; but one of its most important activities lay in the discouragement of profiteering. Failures of the corn crop were inevitably followed by distress in the districts affected, and towards those dealers who snatched advantage from the situation the Star Chamber took up the severest attitude. For

example, in the case of "one Archer of Southchurch in Essex," charged with storing instead of selling his corn, and consequently "enhancing the price," the defendant was fined 100 marks to the King, £10 to the poor, and sentenced to stand in the pillory in Newgate Market an hour with a paper in his hat setting forth his crime, and to stand likewise in the pillories of Leadenhall Market and Chelmsford. "This Archer," quoth Laud, "was guilty of a most foul offence, which the Prophet hath termed in a very energetical phrase, grinding the faces of the poor. . . . This last year's famine was made by man and not by God." (6) On 23rd November, 1631, seven Norfolk harbourers of corn were fined £100 apiece and commanded to declare their sins at the next assizes, while two coiners of brass farthings, who apparently stood their trial on the same indictment, were fined £500 each and sent to the pillory and afterwards to the house of correction. The court held that "both the offences met at this centre, the prejudice of the poor, for the one would let them have no bread, and the others no small money to buy bread." (7) Further it may be noted that the court directed that enquiries should be made as to why the local justices, who were primarily responsible for the administration of their district, had taken no action.

The Court of High Commission dealt chiefly with ecclesiastical offences, dissenting or incontinent parsons, errors in the printing of the Bible, adultery, simony, matters of church discipline, scandalous books, the alleged christening of a cat. "The Bishop said the printing is so bad and the paper too (of the Bible) that if it be not mended shortly, they will be put down by Amsterdam and their trade spoiled. . . . I knew the time when greater care was had about printing . . . but now the

paper is naught, the composers boys, and the correctors unlearned." "They have digged an old Bishop out of his grave," runs another charge, "and have made a mazzard of his skull, and his bones are in the apothecary's shop." (8) But the chief business of the judges was the regulation of non-conformists, both papist and puritan. The test was the administration of the oath; and on refusal, no mercy was shown to the delinquent. However far the efforts of the judges might go to provide for the material welfare of their people, they matched them in their minds by their care for their souls. Travelling lecturers were put down. Controversial topics in sermons forbidden. In his capacity as archbishop, Laud took it upon himself to interfere in parish administration, his bishops' prerogative, and to enter into the smallest details of parish life. Conformity was enforced. The ordinances against unlicensed printing reiterated. To those critical of the Church's constitution and the Church's theology, it seemed as if an English Inquisition was being enlisted. Puritanism was for the time clubbed; but its life could not be stamped out.

Puritanism was in fact far from dead. While the champion of conformity was thinking that the policy of "thorough" would carry the day, Puritanism was growing in strength and defiance. By being kept under, it burned the fiercer. During the years of absolute government, there were two major explosions, which should have warned the rulers of the dangers preparing for them. The first occurred in 1633, when there appeared a stout volume under the bright title of *Histrio-mastix, wherein it is largely evidenced . . . that popular Stage plays (the very Pompes of the Divell, which we renounce in baptism, if we beleeve the Fathers) are sinful, heathenish, lewd and ungodly Spectacles,*

and most pernicious corruptions; condemned in all ages as intolerable mischiefs to the Churches, the Republics, to manners, minds and souls of men, etc. The author was William Prynne, an utter-barrister and a Presbyterian. The book was the acme of all the objurgation of all the Puritan writers against the drama for the past fifty years. There was very little method in Prynne's attack. He relied rather on the strength of his vituperation and the mass of his quotation than on the logical exposition of his case. Any and every excerpt which he could find in any writing from those of the early Christian Fathers to the latest Puritan pamphleteer was packed in as proof of his contention. Repetition and redundancy were employed to urge his case. When, as it frequently did, argument failed, the author fell back on virulent abuse. The theatres served none but bad ends; the plays were " wholly composed of or at least fraught with ribaldry, scurrility, unchaste and amorous strains and passages; obscure and filthy jests which inquinate the mind, corrupt the manners, and defile the souls of men, yea, pollute the very places and common ayre, where they are acted." Even representations of sacred subjects were condemned. The Church was reviled, first, for permitting these plays, secondly for the employment of ritual, which the author held to be synonymous with play acting. Further anything which might be associated with the stage, dancing, singing, music, was assailed with equal fury, " effeminate, delicate, lust provoking music as St Basil phraseth it, which Christians ought to fly as a most filthy thing." Everything, in a word, which ministered to the æsthetic side of the human mind is " sinful, yea, abominable." Perhaps the objurgation and scurrility of the huge volume might have passed unchallenged; the world was fully

inured to authors who did not shrink from the fullest expression of their minds: but Prynne included among the objects of his diatribe the much distrusted Catholic queen of Charles. In consequence, he was brought before the Star Chamber, and fined £5000, deprived of his degrees, disbarred, sentenced to the pillory, to lose his ears, and to be imprisoned for life. Yet his ardour was in no way damped. In prison, he nursed his revenge, and continued his crusade.

The second explosion was the case of John Hampden and Ship Money, a case which illustrates well the business side of Puritanism. Though it has been constantly painted as an instance of a high-souled patriot outfacing a tyrannous executive, put in less high flown language it is merely an example of a country gentleman, backed by various mercantile interests, resisting the tax-gatherer. The evidence and the merits of the case are as yet only partially known; up to recent times we have only been admitted to the Puritan legend: yet it is beginning to appear that the King was justified to a large extent in his action, and that John Hampden has achieved his laurels by an action which would put his modern equivalent as fast in gaol as he. The importance of the case lies in its position as one of the flood-marks in the rising tide of individualism, the impulse to assert the rights of the individual as apart from the social structure.

The cases of Prynne and Hampden illustrate the parallel lines on which religious interests and political and mercantile interests were moving side by side towards revolution. Prynne was chiefly preoccupied with religion, Hampden with politics. Prynne is the rabid anti-Roman fanatic, Hampden the representative of the rising business classes. Nothing but their hatred of dictated government

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allied them. While the civil war ran its course, they fought side by side each thinking the other of his own complexion. After the King's surrender, they woke to their mistake and fell apart with gestures of mutual repugnance.

In the year of the Hampden case, Prynne, smarting under his wrongs and uncoerced by imprisonment, issued a counterblast to episcopacy, couched in the same style of primitive abuse as *Histrio-mastix*. He was promptly arraigned, and with him were joined two similar polemists, Henry Burton, a City rector, and Dr John Bastwick. None was less violent than the next in manner of his attack. The Bishops were " bloody beasts," " the little toes of Antichrist," " wicked, profane and unconscionable men." " So great is his antipathy to the episcopacy," it was said of Prynne, " that if a seraphim himself should be a bishop, he would either find or make some sick feathers in his wings." (9) The libellers were found guilty, severe punishments were inflicted on them, and they were sent to confinement in different and distant parts of the country. But the severity of the punishments had an unlooked for result. Instead of Prynne and his fellows being objects of national obloquy, they were looked upon as martyrs; and on their way to their respective gaols they were met and welcomed by sympathizing crowds. Paternal government had gone a step too far. People forget their benefits in the face of a grievance.

These benefits were real. For apart from the contentious question of uniformity, the work of the Council was wholly and honestly towards the benefit of the nation, and of the lower orders in particular. By the abolition of a number of Saints' days under Elizabeth, a large number of holidays had been lost to the working man. The enforcement of a stricter sabbatarianism

gave him no leisure or opportunity for rest and recreation. King James's *Book of Sports* had been allowed to lapse under the severe rule of Abbot. It was reissued in 1633; and it was enjoined upon incumbents to read its articles from the pulpit. "With our own ears, we have heard" (so runs the King's Declaration) "the general complaint of our people, that they were barred from all lawful recreations and exercise upon the Sunday's afternoon, after the ending of all divine service, which cannot but produce two evils . . . persuading them that no honest mirth or recreation is lawful or tolerable in our religion, which cannot but breed a great discontentment in our people's hearts . . . the other inconvenience is that this prohibition barreth the common and meaner sort of people from using such exercises as may make their bodies more able for war . . . and in place thereof sets up filthy tippling and drunkenness. . . . For when shall the common people have leave to exercise, if not upon the Sundays and Holy-days, seeing that they must apply their labour and win their living in all working days?" (10) The defined sports included dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May games, Whitsun ales, morris dances and may-poles, while women were directed further to employ themselves in decorating the churches. Prohibited games were bull and bear baiting, interludes and bowls, a pursuit, it may be noted to which the future Lord Protector was much addicted.

The insistence on the duty of the rich towards the poor is iterated and reiterated in the ordinances and proclamations of this decade. The Lord Keeper's speech to the judges about to set out on circuit in 1632, is characteristic of this benevolent tyranny. Short shrift is to be given to papists and recusants. Fast days are to be observed:

there have been complaints of the scarcity of fish, due, it is said, to the discouragement of the fishermen; the Lord Mayor of London is directed to see that a plentiful supply of cheap fish is available. But the main point of the speech is with reference to the country gentleman who neglects his estate and duty to come to London, "the new courtier of the King," as the song ran. "What do they, their wives and their servants? Themselves go from ordinaries to dining houses, and from there to playhouses; their wives dress themselves in the morning, visit in the afternoon, and perhaps make a journey to Hyde Park and so home again; their servants to playhouses, to brothel houses, drunkenness, to any vice, so that this appeareth . . . to be very hurtful to the common good." (11) The result of their levity is that there are very few justices of the peace and freeholders left in the counties to do the necessary services. Such as neglect their duties thus are to be rebuked and discouraged, and turned back to their duties. Last, a burning trouble, enclosures tending to depopulation, which had been the bane of agriculture in the sixteenth century, are again being made; and these are to be stopped. "One thing I must tell you," runs a passage in a letter from Laud to the Warden of All Souls, Oxford, in 1637, "that though I did you this favour, to make stay of the hearing till your return, yet for all the business itself I can show you none; partly because I am a great hater of depopulation in any kind, as being one of the greatest mischiefs in this kingdom, and of very ill example from a College, or college tenant; and partly because it concerns me in the particular of my archbishopric." (12)

At the same time the most vigorous steps were being taken towards the proper administration of Poor Relief.

The greatest pains were taken to provide corn for the poor in periods of famine: wheat, rye and barley were imported from the Continent and sold at below cost price. A scheme was put on foot for the provision of public granaries, where grain could be stored against times of dearth. The price of beer was regulated. Work was found for the unemployed. The justices, churchwardens and overseers of the poor-houses were constantly being urged by the Council to greater activity in this particular duty. Strenuous efforts were made to arrive at and impose a minimum wage; and a real attempt fostered to provide employment for all. Pressure was brought to bear on employers of labour and merchants to keep men on, even in times of bad trade. As an example, when in 1629 there was a deliberate hold-up of cloth by merchants to avoid passing it through the customs, a political movement which brought as a consequence much unemployment, the Council threatened to throw open the trade to foreigners and leave the inevitable competition to bring their opponents to their senses. In addition to attempting to provide employment in England, the Council encouraged the emigration of those for whom no work could be found, to Virginia and Barbados. In short, taken as a whole, it is a fact that in no other period in the history of England has the Poor Law been administered so faithfully and so successfully as under the tyranny of Charles I.

Unhappily for the Council, even the best of schemes, the most remunerative of plans, the most popular of projects require money for their undertaking; and money was not abundant. For all the keenness of their perception and the vigour of their enterprise, there was bound to come a time when the exchequer could no longer cope with the demands put upon it. Without a

parliament, the King was forced to have recourse to exactions, which first were just within the law, which then might be held to be just within the law, and finally to those which the judges had to be 'persuaded' by the King's necessity, to admit justifiable at law. Tonnage and poundage were enforced. A curious improvisation of James I to confer obligatory knighthoods on all free-holders with estates of above £30 *per annum*, was revived. Corporations had avoided the injunctions of Elizabeth against monopolies; monopolies were farmed out to new companies. The soap-boiling corporation, a device of Laud's, which created an annual revenue of £20,000 for the King, was set up; and fell into immediate unpopularity. The Archbishop was hooted through the streets, and pelted with shouts of "Popish soap." Finally, the imposition of Ship Money, even though the King spent the money on the object named and laid the foundations of the fleet which in another twenty years would beat the Dutch off the sea, touched all taxable classes on the raw. Not only did the King's arrangement with the judges give grave scandal; it began to be feared that the formation of a permanent navy would be followed by the raising of a standing army to crush out for ever the hopes of individualists.

Kings and governments are disliked even more heartily for their good than for their bad works. The policy of ruling England by attempting to control every form of trade and every class of the population earned for the regime of "thorough" an indurate and bitter hatred. The tradesman and the consumer loathed the monopolizing corporation. The wholesaler and the manufacturer girded at the Star Chamber which regulated their prices. The landowner nursed his grievance against the Depopula-

tion Commission which prevented his enclosing common land. The members of the corporations complained that they had been robbed to secure their rights, while the adventurers in colonial enterprises distrusted the Crown's foreign policy. The middle classes had reached a pitch of seething anger against governmental interference with their divine right to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market. It needed only the occasion for the boiling depths to fling themselves to the surface.

The war with the Scots, the " Bishops' War," gave the irritated electorate its chance. Even in the face of invasion they refused all compromise with the King. The Short Parliament met, was bluntly obstinate, refused subsidies for the war, and was dismissed. Six months later a new parliament was summoned. In the hands of the Puritan middle classes lay the future not only of the monarchy, but of the English people.

CHAPTER SIX

So far English Puritanism had hesitated from identifying itself definitely with any sect beyond the bounds of the Anglican Church. Indeed, many of the adherents of the Puritan party in the Long Parliament would have shrunk from such an accusation. The name Puritan was connected with Geneva and Presbyterianism; and for the most part, the men who took their seats in November, 1640, were still conformist, if, in their own minds, reformers. "When the War was first raised," says Baxter, "there was but one Presbyterian known in all Parliament. There was not one Presbyterian known among the Lord Lieutenants, whom the Parliament committed the Militia to. There was not one Presbyterian known among all the General Officers of the Earl of Essex Army; nor one among all the English Colonels, Majors or Captains that ever I could hear of. (There were two or three swearing Scots. . . .) But it was the moderate Conformists and Episcopal Protestants, who had long been crying out of Innovations, Arminianism, Popery, but specially of Monopolies, illegal taxes and the danger of arbitrary government, who raised the war. . . . And a few Independents were among them, but no considerable number." (1) "I heard of no notable sectary," he says in another place, "but young Sir Harry Vane." (2) If Baxter is perhaps not strictly accurate, he echoes the belief of his day. Whatever the English Puritan was, he

was not to be identified with his Presbyterian allies from across the Scottish border.

English Puritanism is of its own peculiar brand. It does not, as does Scottish Presbyterianism, descend in the direct line from Geneva. What strains of Calvinism it possessed, it had carefully, if unconsciously selected. Puritanism assimilated to itself virtues and joys undreamed in Geneva; but, by its very self-assuredness, it set its stamp on England and parts of Northern America so deeply that the passage of years has but now begun to deface its image and superscription.

It was hammered out in the dark workshops of the mind by souls struggling for enlightenment. "This fight and combat with Sin and Satan," said one of its deepest thinkers, "is not to be known by the rattling of chariots or the sound of an alarm: it is indeed alone transacted upon the inner stage of men's souls and spirits." (3) It was brought forth as steel many times tempered by the fire, as terrible and as awful an engine as the destruction that wasteth at noonday. Yet though its welders did not know it, in its very strength and perfection lay their own danger. It bred an arrogance, which in less fiery times led to self-complacence. It produced a self-assuredness, which as it conquered, brought on self-righteousness. It blessed a discipline to be turned in time to other ends than those for which it was devised.

But in their beginnings, the English Puritans saw nothing of all this. The search for the light of truth was the single idea that led them. "Yet to honour my God by declaring what He hath done for my soul, in this I am confident and will be so. Truly then this I find: That He giveth springs in a dry barren wilderness, where no water is. I live, you know where—in Meshec, which they say

signifies *Prolonging*; in Kedar, which signifies *Blackness*; yet the Lord forsaketh me not. Though He do prolong, yet He will I trust bring me to His tabernacle, to His resting place. . . . If here I may honour my God either by doing or by suffering I shall be most glad.

" Truly no poor creature hath more cause to put himself forth in the cause of his God than I. . . . The Lord accept me in His Son, and give me to walk in light—and give us to walk in light as He is the light. He it is that enlighteneth our blackness, our darkness. I dare not say He hideth His face from me. He giveth me to see light in His light. One beam in a dark place hath exceeding much refreshment in it:—blessed be His Name for shining upon so dark a heart as mine! You know what my manner of life hath been. Oh, I lived in and loved darkness, and hated light; I was a chief, the chief of sinners. This is true: I hated godliness, yet God had mercy on me. O the riches of His mercy! Praise Him for me. . . ." (4)

A cynic might deride such agonies of self-torment in the mind of one whose chief sin at that date, so far as history can gather, was a matter of sharp practice over some parcel of an uncle's land. Yet Cromwell's confession is perfectly genuine. What is more, it proffers a creed which is the root of Puritanism. Alone and naked, man faces his God, and is forced to the conviction that, since life is as an handbreadth and will be burned up, so he must concern himself only with the preparation for his destined end. " My heart was hot within me," said the Psalmist: " while I was musing, the fire burned. Then spake I with my tongue. ' Lord, make me to know mine end and the measure of my days what it is, that I may know how frail I am . . . surely every man is vanity.' " In the spirit of the Psalmist, the Puritans communed with

God. They wrestled with the powers of darkness, and they emerged conquerors, triply armed against the world. What were kings to those, who, like Enoch, had walked with God? What were the Sacraments and other vain shows of the Church to those who had seen God with their own eyes? For him who came forth from his spiritual battle, purified, the powers and principalities were but instruments to be beaten and moulded to the pattern willed by God. It was not as a passive saint, a sheep to be led to the slaughter that the Puritan saw himself, but as God's soldier, straining to fight his battles.

" Kept long with the calls of approaching death at one ear and the quakings of a doubtful conscience at the other," young Richard Baxter entered on his self-examination. " I wondered at the senseless hardness of my heart, that I could think and talk of Sin and Hell and Christ, of God and Heaven with no more feeling. I cried out from day to day to God for Grace against this senseless deadness. I called myself *the most hard-hearted sinner* that I could *feel* nothing of all that I knew and talked of." By reading, by study, by self-communion, he was at last able to declare the perceived benefits of God's method. " It made the World seem to me as a Carcase that had neither Life nor Loveliness. And it destroyed those ambitious desires after Literate Fame, which was the Sin of my Childhood! . . . Sickness and Solicitousness for my doubting Soul did shame away all those Thoughts as Fooleries and Children's Plays. It set me upon that Method of my Studies. . . . And it caused me to study *Practical Divinity* first, in the most *Practical Books*, in a *Practical Order*, doing all purposely for the informing and reforming of my own Soul." (5)

Mrs Hutchinson relates how her husband, " taking

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delight in the study of divinity, presently left off all foolish nice points that tended to nothing but vain brangling, and employed his whole study in laying a foundation of sound and necessary principles, among which he gave the first place to that of God's absolute decrees. This was so far from producing a carelessness of life in him, . . . that on the other side, it excited him to a more strict and holy walking in thankfulness to God, who had been pleased to choose him out of the corrupted mass of lost mankind, to fix his love upon him, and give him the knowledge of himself by his ever blessed Son. The principle of love and life in God . . . had from a child preserved him from wallowing in the mire of sin and wickedness, wherein most of the gentry of these times were miserably plunged." (6)

In Cromwell's confession, in Baxter's apologia, and in Colonel Hutchinson's study of causes, lie the impulse of Puritanism. "By doing," says the first: "It set upon me a method," says the second: "The most practical books . . . in the most practical order"; "practical divinity." "Sound and necessary principles," writes the third. Order, method, trial, action are the first requisites for the pilgrimage which is but a preparation. It is a long weary road, beset by snares, gins, pitfalls and dangers. Giant Despair waits for those whom Giant Pope has missed. Only by unremitting toil, by never letting the eyes or the feet stray from the pathway, by organization, by discipline, can the pilgrim hope to cross the river. Practical order and method are the only watchwords to create the armies of the saints, to teach those plain russet-coated captains to wheel and charge in a compact, irresistible body.

The strength of Puritanism lay in that godly self-

discipline which embraced and controlled every detail of existence, not only the spiritual but the material life, not only in religion but in the factory, the shop, the counter and the home, the hours of business, the hours of leisure, and the snares of amusement. Where should men be found to endure this hardening, if not among the practical sorts of man, the surging, energetic middle classes, the country gentlemen and farmers, who lived on the fruits of their land, the efficient merchants of the turbulent cities, the master workmen and the small freeholders, strong in their industrious capacities, heavy with contempt for a government which attempted to restrain their energies.

If life is only a preparation for the future existence, it ill becomes a man to trifle with it, to yield to temptations and to imperil his immortal soul. To the Puritan, any hour not given either by mind or by body to God was a step down on the ladder to Heaven: but if life is efficiently ordered the climber will pause on no rung. For this reason, he grew to regard all hours given to pleasure as hours lost on the pilgrimage. Light things, games, dancing, vain books, secular music, painting, all æsthetic joys, must be sternly repressed. They fritter away time which should be given to self-perfection. Even conversation with friends on any but holy topics must be restricted within narrow limits. Contented to work and pray, the Puritan excluded all curiosity beyond.

Yet, in bringing these ideals into practice, the outlook of the idealist grew straitened. "To labour is to pray" is a facile and a dangerous maxim; doubly so, when it is strengthened by that other; "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." The transplantation of moral saws from their contexts makes them the sport of sophistry.

It was so easy for the proverb to turn on its tail, and for labour and prayer to become identified, for material benefit to mix with spiritual profit. The Puritan fell into the trap that, unaware, he had prepared. He dedicated himself to his mundane toil as the Anglican to his Sacrament. The sweat of his body he felt more savoury to God than the odour of incense. Work, ordered methodical labour, sanctified itself. Success in labour was the blessing of God upon His servant's efforts. And as success arrived the Puritan grew to despise rivals in the field who had been less successful than he, as those on whom the Lord showered not His mercies. From success blossomed an arrogance. The aristocracy of trade was beginning to ennoble itself. Small wonder that it had no respect for the ill-organized, the unfortunate, the unfit, and the poor on the one hand, or, on the other had little sympathy with those who hankered after 'honest mirth and recreation,' and other sports of idleness. "The flesh is bruckle, the feend is slee." This way, indeed, was the road to perdition. As for the lewd court, and the so-called gentry, those feckless squanderers, "I had rather have a plain russet-coated Captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else" (7), remarked one who had some experience of practical life.

So, in the course of time, the Puritan, restrained by paternal government both in his religion and in his trade, grew to exasperation. He began to shout the claim of all individualists, the claim to do what he chose with his own, restrained by nothing save his own conscience. He found many friends, both religious and material-minded, to wear his colours and urge his pretensions, men of so many different minds and desires that it would be hard to find two

seeing eye to eye in all the party. Not all the reformers by any means, were possessed of the rigid uprightness of a Baxter, not all of the practical honesty of a Cromwell, not all of the sensitive patriotism of a Falkland. Running an eye over the members and hangers-on of the Long Parliament in 1640, one sees a number of individuals destined to play prominent parts in the next few years, few of whom are touched by dreams, but many who are actuated by motives at once more plausible and more profitable.

It is worth while to glance for an instant at that little group, which for the past seven years had been constantly meeting for the discussion of business, the directorate of the Company of Adventurers of the Plantation of the islands of Providence, Henrietta, and so forth in the Caribbean. It was a very godly directorate, it may be noted. Its members were as zealous for the souls as for the bodies of its colonists. They despatched four ministers of religion and a midwife to attend their various needs; and though they would not permit the shipping of playing cards, dice or tables, they were sufficiently human to suggest chess or shooting for their servants' recreation. But on the subject of the profits of the undertaking, they were less indulgent, and showed little sympathy with their mediævally minded colonists, who, having borne the heat and burden of the work, held themselves entitled to a larger share of the profits than the directorate considered fitting. The Governors of the Providence Island adventurers were as practical in this matter of their trade interests as they were to be in the other matter of their legislative interests. For among the directorate are found the names of those who formed the solid phalanx of anti-royal hoplites, Pym, Rudyerd, St John, Sir William

Waller, Hampden, Nathaniel Rich, Mountford, Gerrard, not to speak of their allies in the House of Lords, "Old Subtlety," the fanatic William Fiennes, Lord Say and Sele, the veering Holland, and the founder of Massachusetts, Lord Warwick. The Adventurers are the first organized cave in the House of Commons, and their leader was "that good fat man, Master John Pym," the spear-head of the enemies of episcopacy, who "mouth and rage, sweat, censure and condemn."

Pym is the model for all aspiring demagogues: though but few have the good fortune to die before their bankruptcy of constructive ideas is laid bare. As a party manager, he was incomparable. Not one in Parliament knew so well how to whip up a popular frenzy, how to procure signatures to a monster petition, how to bring a mob to Westminster quickly enough to overawe a wavering assembly to vote his way. Pym had luck: he was sure of his enemy. He had pierced Charles's soul, and knew that he could trust him for a policy of no compromise and of fatuous intrigue, the tale of which he could carry to the House with yet another scare of plots, to hold back the moderate men from the path to peace. The politician who presented the Grand Remonstrance was perfectly alive to the fact that its propositions would have no result but to stiffen the antagonism of the 'malignant' party and the King against the House of Commons. No note of peace echoed in its brazen clauses. What lay hidden at the end of Pym's schemes no man knows; none will ever know: but surely it was not for lack of ambition that he got the title of 'King Pym.' Perhaps the only people who guessed him were the wretched women, who, on 9th April, 1643, assailed the approaches to the House, shouting for peace. "Give us those traitors that were

against peace, that we may tear them in pieces! Give us that dog Pym! Let us throw dog Pym into the Thames!" The guard of Waller's troopers charged the mob, riding some down, wounding others, and dispersed them. As Cromwell at another time told the Dorset Clubmen, there was no room in the country for third parties to the quarrel between the King and the middle classes.

True demagogue, religion was ever in Pym's mouth. "The greatest liberty of our kingdom is religion," he might say: yet in defiance of his manifesto, little else than destructive criticism can be found in any of his declarations. They are all of the same heresy-hunting character, full of talk of purging, better couched, but in spirit no whit different from the bombast of cathedral-spoiling Culmer. Pym tore down episcopacy, and found nothing better to replace it than the crude tyranny of the presbytery. "Barren as brick clay," is Carlyle's verdict. But Pym was devout, and he was well aware of the value of such an attitude to a politician ambitious, if not for himself (there is no reason to suppose that he was not), at least for his own narrow views. There is nothing to show that Pym was possessed of that self-tormenting mysticism which produced the best and the worst of Puritanism. Pym represents the spirit of negation as certainly as his adversary the King. Between the materialist and the self-deceiver, there was little room for moderate men.

Yet moderate men there were in and about that curious assembly, the Long Parliament; men who foresaw the rocks toward which the country was driving and strove with the wilful on both sides to turn the ship into quiet waters. There were even individuals graced with the vision to see England as one country, to believe in some

doctrine not wholly of person or party, who painfully with many questionings groped their way towards the light.

A dozen miles or so north of Oxford lies a village well screened from the main road; Great Tew is its name. Save for one ugly classical barrack of a manor, it must be to-day much what it was in the decade preceding the Civil War. Here still, between Italianate arches, bloom the gardens of Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, along whose paths had paced many famous or beloved men. Ben Jonson, Edward Hyde, Suckling, Sidney Godolphin had all sat, laughed, argued and extemporized verses beneath the scented, bee-laden limes. The ' sessions of the poets ' had ended with the deaths of ' little Sid ' and old Ben: and the master of the garden had turned him to other worlds.

" He was of late so gone with divinity
That he had almost forgotten his poetry,"

had mocked Suckling. In the places of the poets were now marshalled the divines and other grave men, Sheldon, Morley, Hammond, and above all, Chillingworth, that passionate explorer, and Selden, epitome of common sense. It is this little group which stands for the refusal to break with tradition. Where the left wing, Pym and the Adventurers, were ready to remove, burn and destroy all that stood in their way, and to erect some curious contrivance of their own device, of which the middle sort of man should be the centre and the spring, the educated, subtle minds of the ' Convivium Philosophicum ' sought to mould the traditional estates into a shape suitable to the times. The extremists would have torn down the Crown and the Church. The moderates would have supported the Crown without Wentworth, and the

Church without Laud. Falkland is to many the model of the perfect patriot, " a person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so glowing and obliging a humanity and goodness to mankind, and of that primitive simplicity and integrity of life, that if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed civil war than that single loss, it must be most infamous and execrable to all posterity." (8) He stood for the broad view in politics, the country as a whole rather than the sectarianism of interests, and for toleration in religion. This latter was the fruit of Chillingworth's company.

William Chillingworth is the most important apologist of the Church of England since Hooker. Laud's godson, he had at one time gone over to Rome; but he had, at his godfather's entreaty and persuasion, returned to the Anglican system. His *Religion of Protestants; A Safe Way to Salvation*, 1638, written in part under Falkland's roof, is the complete defence of the Laudian church. Like the Puritans, Chillingworth took his stand upon the Bible; but unlike them, he refused to interpret the word of God, which he declared to be " sufficiently perfect and sufficiently intelligible to all that have understanding whether they be learned or unlearned."

" But," he says to his adversary, " you that would not have men follow their reason, what would you have them follow? Their passions? or pluck out their eyes, and go blindfold? No, you say, you would have them follow authority. In God's name let them; we also would have them follow authority; for it is upon the authority of universal tradition that we would have them believe Scripture." (9)

Again he says: " Know thou, sir, that when I say the

religion of protestants is in prudence to be preferred before yours (*i.e.* of the Roman Catholic), as on the one side, I do not understand by your religion the doctrine of Bellarmine or Baronius, or any other private man amongst you: nor the doctrine of the Sorbonne, or of the Jesuits, or of the Dominicans, or of any other particular company among you, but that wherein you all agree, or profess to agree, 'the doctrine of the council of Trent:' so accordingly on the other side, by 'the religion of protestants,' I do not understand the doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon; nor the confession of Augusta (Augsburg), or Geneva, nor the Catechism of Heidelberg, nor the Articles of the Church of England, no, nor the harmony of protestant confessions; but that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of their faith and actions; that is, the BIBLE. The BIBLE, I say, the BIBLE only, is the religion of protestants." (10)

Further, in this belief, Chillingworth held that the curse of Christianity is and has always been the attempt to clarify and to impose meanings upon the words of the Bible. "This presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the general words of God, and laying them upon men's consciences together, under the equal penalty of death and damnation; this vain conceit that we can speak of the things of God better than in the words of God; this deifying our own interpretations and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty, wherein Christ and the apostles left them; is and hath been the only fountain of all the schisms of the church, and that which makes them immortal; the common incendiary of Christendom, and that which (as I said before) tears into pieces, not the

coat, but the bowels and members of Christ: *Ridente Turca nec dolente Judæo.* Take away these walls of separation, and all will quickly be one. Take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men for not subscribing to the words of man as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master but him only; let those leave claiming infallibility that have no title to it, and let them that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their actions. In a word, take away tyranny, which is the devil's instrument to support errors and superstitions and impieties in the several parts of the world, which could not otherwise long withstand the power of truth; I say, take away tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their understanding to Scripture only; and as rivers, when they have a free passage, run all to the ocean, so it may well be hoped, by God's blessing, that universal liberty, thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to truth and unity. These thoughts of peace (I am persuaded) may come from the God of peace, and to his blessing I commend them, and proceed." (11)

The passage is one of the most passionate and moving pleas for religious toleration in English literature. But alas! for these and such as these, children of enlightenment and charity, there could be no place in a world given more whole-heartedly than Laud to the demon of dogmatism, enflamed with passion, willing itself to break all opposition. What avail the sweet eloquence of a Fuller, the holy sense of justice of a Digby, the cynic reason of a Selden, against 'that synod of inflexible patriots,' half mad with terror for the safety of their goods and money, and swollen with the windy fodder of theological controversy?

The Long Parliament met on 3rd November, 1640. In a fortnight the managers of the anti-royal party, the Providence Island Adventurers, led by Pym, had Strafford down, imprisoned, to stand his trial on a bill of impeachment. They found it extremely difficult to prove their case, constructive treason against the State being unknown in law; and their victim had undoubtedly worked for the King. There was some attempt to fake the evidence. The younger Vane, son of the privy councillor, produced what purported to be a copy of a Council memorandum, showing a suggestion from Strafford of the transference of the Irish Army to England "to subdue the kingdom." The original mysteriously disappeared. Pym harangued the House in a curious mixture of theology, law and expedient common sense, showing how dangerous Strafford was from the House's point of view, and talked a little mistily of the fundamental laws of the realm. Edmund Waller, the poet, pertinently but rashly asked what the fundamental laws might be; and was lucky to suffer no worse than to be put in his place, and told that if he did not know them, he had no right to a seat in the assembly. It was true. He should have known that the fundamental laws were such as appeared good to the Puritan majority. "The Parliament Party," said Selden, "if the Law be for them, they call for Law; if it be against them they go the Parliamentary way; if the Law be for them, then for Law again: like him that first called for Sack to heat him, then small Drink to cool his Sack, then Sack again to heat his small Drink." (12)

The managers found the bill of impeachment a treacherous plank. It looked as if it might slip at any moment. They therefore transferred to a bill of attainder, and brought the mob to Westminster to shout for

Strafford's head. Even so the legality of the procedure was doubtful; but St John, the solicitor-general, soothed tender consciences by the brutal exposition of the dogma that there are no laws for "Polcats and other vermin." Digby alone withstood the bloodthirstiness of the majority. "God keep me," he exclaimed, "from giving Judgment of Death upon any Man, and of Ruin to his Posterity upon a law made *a posteriori*. . . . Let every man lay his hand upon his own heart, and sadly consider what we do with a Breath, either Justice or Murther, Justice on the one side or Murther heightened and aggravated to its superior extent. . . . Doubtless he that commits Murther with the Sword of Justice heightens the Crime to the utmost. . . . Away with Flatteries to the People in being the sharper against him because he is odious to them: away with all fears lest by the sparing of his blood, they may be incensed." (13) Such sentiments only infuriated the House against their utterer. Digby was called upon to explain himself: but before his enemies could take action, the King by creating him a peer, raised him to the upper House and saved him from the fundamentalist claw-backs. Digby's pleading had done nothing for the accused. The managers pressed home their attack. Essex's words, "Stone dead hath no fellow," crystallized the temper of the moment. Charles offered his personal bail for Strafford, and never to employ him again. On this, the Adventurers, through Lord Say and Sele, 'Old Subtlety,' persuaded the King to come down to the Lords and speak in the prisoner's favour. The only and expected result was to ally the King definitely on Strafford's side, and to bring the real antagonists, Parliament and the Crown, into the open. The sponsors of the bill countered the King's move by producing a mob

screaming for the blood of Strafford, Digby and other betrayers of their country, those who had voted against the employment of such a method of getting rid of Strafford. Panic seized the Lords; they voted for the bill and Strafford's death. The mob escorted the Houses and the bill to the King, and howled for blood. If they were not to have Strafford's, the Queen's would do. Under such persuasion, Charles signed. Two days later, Strafford's head was off; and the best government England had known at an end.

The reformers had dealt swiftly with Strafford, their most dangerous enemy; but they had not neglected the other upholders of the defunct regime. Lord Keeper Finch was impeached, but, hearing the crying of the hounds, saved his skin by fleeing to France, while Secretary Windebank escaped to Holland. Laud, now old and infirm, was laid by the heels; but, having secured him, they left him to fatten until leaner times. Besides, he was still Archbishop of Canterbury, and until they had succeeded in putting down episcopacy, the presentation of livings remained in the Archbishop's hands. The party had many hungry adherents, deprived ministers and earnest Independents from the New England pastorate, who had gone into exile for failure to conform, incontinence, or some other mistake. Until Parliament had settled with the Church—and it was difficult to settle so fundamental a matter with a Scots army over the border determined to impose Presbyterianism, almost a more violent ecclesiasticism than episcopacy—" little Canterbury " must wait to be served, and in the meantime must be encouraged to deal out cures of souls to the righteous.

Canterbury proved strangely obdurate, and with quite vain courage refused a number of the suggestions made

to him. Resort was had to persecution. His goods were sold and the money from the sale impounded. His emoluments of office were stopped, and he was forced to hand over such moneys as he possessed. Lambeth Palace was violated, the organ in the chapel damaged, and the altar hacked about. The palace itself was transformed into a prison, and Leighton, an old enemy, who for offensive libels had been deprived of his ears by the Court of High Commission, was made keeper with a licence to plunder. As often as Laud attended divine service, he was bound to meet a virulent enemy in the pulpit. "There preached one Mr Joslin. His text, Judg. v. 23, 'Curse ye Merosh, etc.' To pass over what was strangely evil throughout his sermon, his personal abuse of me was so foul and so palpable, that women and boys stood up in the church, to see how I could bear it: and this was my first welcome into the church after my long lameness. But I humbly thank God for it, I bare his virulence patiently, and so it vanished: as did much other of like nature, which I bare both before and after this. God forgive them." (14) Returned New England ministers, such as Hugh Peters and Samuel Wells, threatened to persuade the House to send him to the colonies; and whenever opportunity offered, pursued the old man with other playful menaces.

Meanwhile, members of both House pestered the Archbishop with requests to find livings for their suitors. Finding him reluctant to follow their advice, especially when it ran counter to a command of the King's, they deprived him of his powers, only permitting him to fill vacancies with their approval. In this way arose the matter of Richard Culmer, a minister who had been deprived of his cure for his failure to read the *Book of*

Sports and for spitting in the chancel. Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, having a partiality for this divine, made much business to get him presented to the vacant living of Chartham. Laud, remembering Culmer, refused, and was strengthened in his refusal when Culmer attempted to bribe his personal servant. Warwick took up his client's case in the House of Lords, and after a sturdy fight with the Earl of Manchester and a group of his friends, who also had a needy candidate, succeeded in slipping Culmer's appointment through in an empty assembly. Laud's confirmation of the House's appointment was commanded, and Culmer duly installed. In a few months the new incumbent was busy revelling in spoliation of Canterbury Cathedral.

For the wilful, it is an easy matter to fire the heather; a harder task to control the blaze. Those odd persons who delight in phrases such as ' Religion is the opium of the people,' forget that anything, a carved idol, an ideal of the State, an ideal of success, may furnish a religion. The nucleus of the Puritan party in the House of Commons intended no more than to sweep away the political power, both in the Church and the State, of the Bishops, and to shear the King of his pretentions to govern save by their direction. In their legislative capacity, they voted themselves into perpetuity. They abolished the courts of Star Chamber, of High Commission and their minor satellites. They then turned on the Bishops, and attempted to remove from them their powers in the House of Lords. Two bills were defeated; but before the leaders could take stock of the situation, the control of the party was snatched from their hands by the extremists. Oliver Cromwell and the younger Vane introduced a bill, the ' Root and Branch,' for " the utter abolishing and taking away of all

archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, prebendaries, chanters and canons and all other their under officers." Though, after considerable argument, the bill was twice read, and passed into Committee, it was eventually dropped. But it had achieved its object, the definition of parties—the party of revolution and the party of reform. Pym then tabled the Grand Remonstrance. The document, groaning beneath its two hundred admonitory clauses, contained the gist of the Root and Branch demands. A fierce debate ensued, and it was midnight before a decision was reached; the Remonstrance was carried by eleven votes—" so near was the poor kingdom at that time to its deliverance." Pym's victory implied the victory for revolution; and those who opposed him, knew well what their defeat meant. " I thought," wrote Sir Philip Warwick, " we had all sat in the valley of the shadow of death, for we, like Joab's and Abner's young men, had catcht at each other's locks, and sheathed our swords in each other's bowels." (15) It was the final split. Thereafter, it was merely a question of time. The revolutionaries grew fiercer in their demands, the King more evasive or obstinate. Each was gaining a respite to prepare for the inevitable war.

The passions of conflict which the beginning of wars invariably arouse gave, as they invariably do, the opportunity to a number of private persons to satisfy their burning animosities or enthusiasms in public and outrageous manner. The Parliamentary majority was well aware of the importance of turning the only two centres of intellectual opinion outside their immediate control, Oxford and Cambridge, to their interest. On the outbreak of war Lord Say and Sele rode to Oxford, which had

already contributed to the King's war-chest, and, with the aid of parliamentary troops, extracted a promise of good behaviour. Then, contenting himself with the removal of the college plate, which had been dug out from various hiding holes, and permitting his troops to fire a few shots at the images over the porch of St Mary's, he withdrew, before the Royalists could come to the rescue of the loyal city. The King's occupation of Oxford six weeks later saved the university until iconoclastic enthusiasm had cooled: but Cambridge, being far outside the territory commanded by Charles's armies, became an easy prey. In the first months of the war, three masters of colleges were brought to London and imprisoned. The customs of the university were made a pretext for disciplining the fellows. The Book of Common Prayer was publicly destroyed. Troops were billeted on colleges; and commissioners plundered and smashed at their will. Bridges were broken down; and that sanctuary of Baal, Jesus College grove, felled. Still, through enormous difficulties, the university succeeded in maintaining itself for some eighteen months. But in January, 1644, the Earl of Manchester arrived with full powers to purge this tainted congregation. All fellows who refused the Covenant were driven out; all heads of houses were ousted from their masterships, save four, who "by especial favours of their friends, and their own wary compliance, continued in their places"; and their offices were filled with the Puritan fellows of Emmanuel. Perhaps, Cambridge should not be overly pitied for this last act; for the new masters were of very different kidney from that which their sponsors guessed them. The Cambridge Platonist school, of which these men were the leaders, is one of the noblest groups the university has bred, and as far

removed from the centre of Puritanism as the stoutest Arminian.

There was a sense beyond the whims of fanaticism in the Cambridge ejectments. Laud had been well aware of the value of the universities as seed-beds of propaganda, and had packed them with his nominees. It would have been beyond reason for Parliament to have allowed the seats of learning to refuse conformity to the spirit of their will and to breed future generations of malignants. In the case of the cathedrals there was neither wisdom nor reason, but the blind ferocity of destruction.

By an ordinance of August, 1643, the " monuments of superstition and idolatry " were delivered to the furies of the saints. The text of the ordinance is elaborate and thorough, and leaves little except the walls and tombs outside the powers of the wreckers. So licensed, the members of the Counties' Associations, those strongholds of evangelicalism, camps of the fiercest Gideons, had advanced on their prey. Cromwell himself, though later to be mellowed by warfare, did not disdain to smash the wood carvings in St Mary's at Cambridge. A month or so later, he was to be found in Peterborough Cathedral, where " espying a little crucifix in a window aloft, which none perhaps before had scarce observed, gets a ladder and breaks it down zealousy with his own hand." (16) As for his soldiers, " their first business was to tear in pieces all the Common-Prayer Books that could be found. . . . Next they break down all the seats, stalls and wainscots that was behind them, being adorned with several historical passages out of the Old and New Testaments. . . . Whilst they were thus employed, they chance to find a great parchment book behind the ceiling, with some 20 pieces of gold, laid there by a person a little before, as

in a place of safety in those unsafe and dangerous times. This encouraged the soldiers in their work and makes them more eager in breaking down all the rest of the wainscot, in hopes of finding such another prize." (17) A little later, another troop, led by " two martial ministers of Nottingham or Derby," completed the good work. " In the roof of the Church, in a large oval yet to be seen, was the picture of our Saviour seated on a throne, one hand erected, and holding a globe in the other; attended with the four evangelists and saints on each side, with crowns in their hands: intended, I suppose, for a representation of our Saviour's coming to judgment. Some of the company espying this, cry out and say, ' Lo, this is the god these people bow and cringe unto; this is the idol they worship and adore.' Hereupon several soldiers charge their muskets . . . and discharge them at it; and by the many shots they made, at length do quite deface and spoil the picture. . . . When there was no more painted or carved work to demolish, then they rob and rifle the tombs, and violate the monuments of the dead. . . .

" In the north side of the church there was a stately tomb in memory of Bishop Dove, who had been thirty years bishop of the place. He lay there in portraiture in his episcopal robes, on a large bed, under a fair table of black marble, with a library of books about him. These men, that were such enemies to the name and office of bishop, and much more to his person, hack and hew the poor innocent statue in pieces, and soon destroyed all the tomb: so that in a short space all that fair and curious monument was buried in its own rubbish and ruins. . . .

" Now the windows of this church were very fair . . .

but the cloister windows were most famed of all, for their great art and pleasing variety: one side of the quadrangle containing the history of the Old Testament; another that of the New; a third, the founding and founders of the church; a fourth, all the Kings of England downward, from the first Saxon king. All which, notwithstanding, were most shamefully broken and destroyed.

"Such was the soldiers' carriage and behaviour all the time during their stay at Peterboro, which was about a fortnight's space. They went to church duly, but it was only to do mischief, to break and batter the windows and any carved work that was yet remaining, or to pull down crosses wheresoever they could find them; which the first founders did not set up with so much zeal as these last confounders pulled them down." (18)

At Yaxley, a parish in the neighbourhood of Peterborough, the troopers defiled the contents of the font, and baptized horses with the water, signing them with the sign of the Cross. Horses were stabled in the aisles of St Asaph's in Wales. In London, the images and monuments in St Margaret's and the Abbey were roughly beheaded and tumbled down by the "reforming rabble" under the direction of Sir Robert Harley, master of the mint, while the city fathers, in a gust of righteousness, disposed of Cheapside cross. In Suffolk, commissioner William Dowsing, according to his own testimony, laid low more "pagan idols" than apparently had ever existed in the most powerful days of episcopal rule. In the south, Richard Culmer left his flock at Chartham to its own devices, while he joyfully hurried to Canterbury to give himself whole-heartedly over to the joys of destruction.

"The truth is," he tells us in his own racy account, "that on 26th August, 1642, some zealous troopers

. . . fought (it seems) with the cathedral goods, namely, altars, images, service-book, pricksong-book, surplice and organs: for they hewed the altar rails all to pieces, and threw their altar over and over and over down the three altar steps, and left it lying with the heels upward; they slashed some images, crucifixes and pricksong-books and one greasy service-book, and a ragged smock of the whore of Rome, called a surplice, and began to play the tune of the *Zealous Soldier* on the organs or cases of whistles, which never were in tune since. . . . The soldiers afterwards sung cathedral pricksong as they rode over Barham Down towards Dover, with pricksong leaves in their hands, and lighted their tobacco pipes with them. . . .

" But this was but a forerunner of a more orderly and thorough reformation in that cathedral which began on the 13th day of December last. . . . The worthy Mayor and Recorder of Canterbury put on that blessed work of reformation with their speedy warrant. . . . But the commissioners knew not what pictures were in that eastmost window of that cathedral; and coming to it, the first picture they found there was of Austin the monk, who was the first archbishop of Canterbury that ever was, and so it casually fell out that the image of this arch prelate of Canterbury was the first that was demolished in that cathedral. Many window images or pictures in glass were demolished that day, and idols of stone; thirteen, representing Christ and his twelve apostles, standing over the west door of the quire were all hewed down, and twelve more at the north door of the quire, and twelve mitred saints set aloft over the west door of the quire, which were all cast down headlong, and some fell on their heads, and their mitres brake their necks. While this work was in hand, in comes a prebend's wife and

pleaded for the images there, and jeered the commissioners viraginously; but when she saw a picture of Christ demolished, she shrieked out and ran to her husband. . . ."

After a number of further demolitions, the commissioners came to " their prime cathedral saint, Archbishop Thomas Becket . . . most rarely pictured in that window, in full proportion, with cope, rochet, mitre, crosier, and all his pontificalibus. . . . But as that window was the superstitious glory of that cathedral, as it was wholly superstitious, so now it is more defaced than any other window in that cathedral. Whilst judgment was executing on the idols in that window, the cathedralists cried out again for their great Diana, ' Hold your hands, hold, hold, Sir.' A minister (*i.e.* Culmer) being then on the top of the city ladder, near sixty steps high, with a whole pike in his hand rattling down proud Becket's glassy bones (others then present would not venture so high), to him it was said, ' 'Tis a shame for a minister to be seen there'; the minister replied, ' Sir, I count it no shame but an honour. My master whipped the living buyers and sellers out of the temple; these are dead idols which defile the worship of God here, being the fruits and occasions of idolatry.' Some wished he might break his neck, others that it should cost blood; but he finished the work and came down well and was in very good health when this was written. . . . There was a cardinal's hat, as red as blood, painted in the highest window in that cathedral within Bell-Harry steeple, over the quire door, covering the archbishop's arms, which hat had not so much respect shown to it as Cardinal Wolsey's hat had at court,—it was not bowed to, but rattled down. There were also many huge crosses demolished, which stood without the cathedral, four on Bell-Arundel steeple; and

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a great idol of stone . . . over the south door under Bell-Harry steeple, was pulled down by one hundred men with a rope. In the fall it buried itself in the ground; it was so heavy and fell so high. . . . There was demolished also a very large stone image of Christ, over which was the image of the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove. . . . This image was pulled down with ropes; at first the head began to shake and nod to and fro a good while; at last it fell off two hours before the body, which was riveted to the wall with iron bars." And so on, and so forth. "The last execution against idols in that cathedral was done in the cloister; . . . St Dunstan's image pulling the devil by the nose was pulled down devil and all." (19)

The defiling and destruction of so much that was beautiful was implicit in the very idea of Puritanism. Beauty is distracting, a snare for the eye, which will take men from the idea behind the image to the worship of the image itself. "Men now living testify that they have seen travellers kneel to it [a statue of Christ] in the street as they enter the cathedral which is constantly visited by outlandish priests who daily commit idolatry in that cathedral. And yet how many that profess love to true religion and hatred of idolatry, are now zealous for those images, which are monuments and instruments and occasions of idolatry, the continuance of which hath been our great sin, shame and misery. But (say some) the windows and monuments were precious: but we read (Deut. xiii. 6) if any (though never so near or dear unto us) move us to idolatry, we are commanded by God himself to stone them to death, our eye must not pity them: must we not spare a living man, made little inferior to the angels, but must rend and maul him with stones, and shall we not stomach the battering and defacing of

dead images, that are not only monuments of, but enticements to, idolatry? Shall we glamour and clamour as they that shall lament the final fall of Babylon?" (20)

In spite of the powers given them by the ordinances, the image breakers did not always have their way, as the repaired windows of the fragments recovered by pious hands in Winchester Cathedral and College testify to-day. Baxter relates how the 'rabble' at Kidderminster saved their church, and incidentally gave him an unpleasant adventure. "About that time, Parliament sent down an order for the demolishing of all statues and images of any of the three Persons in the blessed Trinity or of the Virgin Mary which could be found in the churches, or on the crosses in the churchyards. The churchwarden (an honest, quiet, sober man) seeing the crucifix upon the Cross in the churchyard, set up a ladder to have reached it, but it proved too short. Whilst he was gone to seek another, a crew of the drunken riotous party of the town (poor journeymen and servants) took alarm and run altogether with weapons to defend the crucifix, and church images (of which there were divers left since the days of Popery); the report was among them that I was the actor, and it was me they sought. But I was walking a mile from the town, or else I suppose I had there ended my days. . . . When they had foamed for about half an hour, and met with none of us, and were newly housed, I came in from my walk, and hearing the people cursing at me in their doors, I wondered what the matter was, but quickly found how fairly I had escaped. The next Lord's day I dealt plainly with them, and laid open to them the quality of that action, and told them, seeing they so requited me as to seek my blood, I was willing to leave them and save them from that guilt. But the poor sots were so amazed

and ashamed, that they took on sorrily and were loth to part with me." (21)

Churches, windows, works of art and other property could be saved if those disposed in their favour were strong enough. For instance, when it was suggested that the Buckingham collection of pictures in York House should be sold to provide money for the payment of the Irish forces, one member of the Commons objected to superstitious pictures being sold for so holy a purpose and proposed that they should be thrown into the Thames. However, the members were saved the trouble of squaring their consciences by the Earl of Northumberland, who being in occupation of York House at the moment, declared that the removal of the canvases would ruin his home, and that, in the event of it taking place, he would look to the House to provide him with another suitable residence. The matter was then dropped.

While Culmer and the other iconoclasts were dealing with the ancient monuments of piety, Prynne, who had been released from gaol in the first months of the Long Parliament, and his associates, were let loose on a round of heresy-hunting. No bishop, no dean, no incumbent of a parish who could be got at, was spared the inquisition of this presbyterian lawyer, whose practice both as counsel and defendant in the Court of High Commission, had amply equipped him to deal with the superstitions of the Anglican Church. No charge was too trivial, no accusation too improbable. Witnesses were coached in their evidence, or the flimsiest of testimony accepted without support. The documents were usually couched in a scurrilous and derisive vernacular in order to heighten the abomination of the imputed idolatry and popery of the accused. " Ducking," " making long legs," " cringing,"

and " mumbling " are some of the more frequent charges, in addition to the crimes of the use of holy water, of candles, of incense and " such other toys," the hanging of veils, " to keep not only the bodies but the eyes of the laics from beholding the ark and throne, wherein the Body of the Son of God doth sit as in a chair of state "; the appropriation of a knife in the vestry for the sole purpose of cutting the sacramental bread, the taking of sentences from the Psalms for the purpose of an anthem, appear on some indictments. Wren, Bishop of Norwich, was imprisoned; Cosin deprived, but he fled. The time had come to crown the work by making an end of Laud.

They had kept the archbishop in prison for two years before bringing him to trial; but he was not to be spared. The spirit of Samuel, hewer of Agag, descended upon the editor of *The Complete Intelligencer*, and he wrote: " Certainly the sparing of him hath been a great provocation to Heaven, for it is a sign that we have not been so careful to give the Church a sacrifice as the State. We could soon revenge our own injuries upon a Strafford, but we have been slow and behind in revenging the cause of God upon Canterbury, he having corrupted our religion, banished the godly, introduced superstition, and embrewed both kingdoms at first in a tincture of blood, and all this unnatural war of ours hath its rise and growth from this unhappy seedtime of his designs." (22)

The direction of the attack was naturally entrusted to Prynne, cropped and revengeful. The trial was long, tedious, and to a modern reader farcical; but even Laud, though he can have expected little mercy, was overwhelmed by the virulence of his pursuers. They could find nothing against him. Witness after witness failed in his testimony, or produced grotesque hearsay. Prynne twisted and faked

his evidence. He had obtained a great number of the archbishop's papers, his private prayers and his diary; and these he proceeded to publish under the title of *Breviate of the Life of William Laud*, a compilation in which he did not hesitate to falsify and suppress wherever by judicious management a sentence could be turned against his enemy. Even the archbishop's dreams as recorded in his diary were brought in to weight the scales. "I dreamed that I was reconciled with the Church of Rome," ran one such passage. "This troubled me much; and I wondered exceedingly how it should happen. (Nor was I aggrieved with myself, if only by reason of the errors of that Church, but also) on account of the scandal, which for that my fall would be cast upon many eminent and learned men in the Church of England." The words contained in brackets were carefully omitted by the venomous compiler, who even descended to the imputation of fleshly sin to the aged churchman.

Then Laud knew the temper of his adversaries. No more than Strafford could he expect mercy, nor from a King, who, he said, knew neither "how to be great or to be made great," help. For one moment he quailed. "My life is in the hands of God," he scribbled at the end of the *Breviate*. "But let not Mr Pryn call for blood." Mr Prynne and the House of Commons, by this time fully persuaded to the healthiness of the doctrine of "stone dead," much helped thereto by the unruly mob, which the Adventurers had raised but could no longer control, insisted on death. As in the case of Strafford, impeachment seemed likely to prove an incapable instrument; they resorted once more to a bill of Attainder. The bill passed the Commons triumphantly; but the manifest injustice of the sentence stuck in the throats of

some of the upper House—but not all. Lord Pembroke, hot for blood, demanded: "What! shall we think the House of Commons had no conscience in passing this ordinance? Yes, they knew well enough what they did." The debate was adjourned, and then, two days later, in a thin House, fourteen all told, Pembroke brought them round to his way of thinking. On the 4th January, 1644–45, the Archbishop of Canterbury was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death by the House of Lords.

Even so Puritanism had not finished with their victim. They peremptorily refused his request to be finished by the axe and to be spared the atrocities connected with the gallows. After some parley, more merciful counsels prevailed, and, on debate, they at length conceded the kinder end. But they refused him two of the three divines he had begged to attend him on the scaffold, substituting in their place a couple of trusty Puritans.

On 10th January, Laud was led out to Tower Hill, and from there spoke to the people; after which Pym's creature, Sir John Clotworthy, plagued him for a short space with some impertinent question, but Laud put him on one side applying himself directly to the executioner as "the gentler and discreeter person." Then he knelt, and after laying his head upon the block, gave the signal: "Lord, receive my soul," whereon the executioner "very dexterously did his office, and took his head off at a blow." In his last speech he had said: "This poor Church of England . . . hath flourished and been a shelter to other neighbouring Churches, when storms have driven upon them. But alas! now it is in a storm itself and God only knows whether, or how it shall get out. And . . . it is become like an oak cleft to shivers with wedges made out

of its own body; and at every cleft profaneness and irreligion is entering, while . . . men that introduce profaneness are cloaked over with the name, *religionis imaginariæ* —of imaginary religion. For we have lost the substance and dwelt too much in opinion; and that Church, which all the Jesuits' machinations could not ruin, is fallen into danger of her own." (23)

With the tumbling of Laud's head there passed from the Church of England the last scruple of her power to stand for moral right. From that time, she has been no longer an equal partner in the State, but a subservient member of the government. Yet, the memory of William Laud is not dead. As Professor Gardiner has written: "His refusal to submit his mind to the dogmatism of Puritanism, and his appeal to the cultivated intelligence for the solution of religious problems, have received an ever increasing response, even in the regions where his memory is devoted to contemptuous obloquy." (24)

A week before Laud's execution, the Book of Common Prayer was abolished by ordinance. Long and sad experience, noted the drafters of the act, had made it manifest that its use was an offence, "not only to the Godly at home; but to the Reformed Churches abroad." The monopolists of Godliness complained of the burden of reading prayers, and of the unprofitable ceremonies, which had occasioned much mischief and disquieted consciences. Many thousand souls had been imperilled by its use. It had much hindered preaching; indeed, in some places, had quite "justled" it out. Last, it had confirmed the Papists in their superstition and idolatry. With these words, the work of Cranmer was thrust out; and in its place was erected a Directory for Public Prayer, which was to be enforced with a quite Laudian thorough-

ness. Worshippers were to be exhorted to forbear from " all private whisperings, conferences, salutations, or doing reverence to any persons present or coming in ; also from all gazing, sleeping and other undecent behaviour," and the minister was instructed to draw attention to the doctrine of Original Sin, " which (beside the great guilt that makes us liable to everlasting Damnation) is the seed of all other sins, hath depraved and poisoned all the faculties and powers of Soul and Body, doth defile our best actions, and (were it not restrained, or our hearts renewed by Grace) would break forth in innumerable transgressions, and rebellions against the Lord, that ever were committed by the vilest of the Sons of Men." (25)

CHAPTER SEVEN

While Culmer and his like had been smashing idols, while Prynne had been trampling the last stir of life from the Church of England, and while Parliament had been busy trying to find a formula for religion which would satisfy their Calvinistic Scottish allies, and yet leave politics free from presbyterial interference, the war had been dragging on its dull track of attrition. Like so many wars, it is a dreary tale of incompetence and mistake. Generals appear and disappear. The number of them in comparison to the strength of the troops engaged is surprising. There are dull generals, rash generals, turncoats and drunkards, dilatory and diplomatic generals, godly generals, querulous generals, and generals filled with vanity, even—notable oddity—a sweet, meek general. In the end it is the stubborn, capable Fairfax, and one genius, Cromwell, who bring the issue to a decision. The Puritan armies won; but it was a near thing. After all, military genius is a considerably rarer flower than political.

To so limited an extent was the dispute between the King and the middle classes the outcome of popular jealousy that both sides had the greatest difficulty in filling the ranks of their armies. Except perhaps among the retainers of the great landowners on the King's side, and the gentlemen and farmers in the eastern counties on the Parliament's, there was no leap forward of volunteers. Without forced levies, it was found impossible to keep

the armies in the field. On both sides, the infantry was composed for the most part of what was known as the rabble, the poorest of the people, who resisted the recruiting officers with unpardonable levity. Baxter implies that such were not to be found in the Parliamentary ranks, which were composed of a "far more intelligent sort of men than the ignorant peasants that are like brutes"; but the recruiters were less nice, and impressed wherever they could without respect to any plea save financial worth. Small wonder that the levies broke away from those who collected them, and took to wandering up and down the countryside, plundering at their pleasure.

Many soldiers for the Parliament were naturally raised in London and its suburbs; labourers, apprentices and so forth. Falkland, writing of the prisoners taken at Shrewsbury in September, 1642, says: "most of them were of mean quality, and so raw soldiers that they understood not the word 'quarter,' but cried for mercy. Being demanded what condition they were, some said, they were tailors, others embroiderers and the like."

Further, the religious scruples of Parliament, anxious to protest their good faith to the Scots, were a continual thorn in the flesh of striving commanders. "Surely," wrote Cromwell, on being told to remove Colonel Packer, an Anabaptist, from his command, "you are not well advised thus to turn off one so faithful to the Cause, and so able to serve you as this man is. . . . Ay, but the man is an Anabaptist. Are you sure of that? Admit he be, shall that render him incapable to serve the Public? He is indiscreet. It may be so in some things: we all have human infirmities. I tell you if you have none but such indiscreet men about you, and would be pleased to use them kindly, you would find as good a fence as any you

have chosen. Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it, takes no notion of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies." (1)

Even when at last marshalled, it was found exceedingly difficult to keep the troops in the field. The London train-bands, who fought so well at Newbury, were ever hankering for their own firesides. "In these two days' march," wrote Waller in 1644, "I was extremely plagued with the mutinies of the City Brigade, who are grown to the height of disorder that I have no hope to retain them, being come to their old song of 'Home! Home!'" A few days later he was joined by reinforcements under Browne, when the complaints turned to active reality. "My London regiments immediately looked on his forces as sent to relieve them, and, without expectation of further orders, are most of them gone away. Yesterday no less than 400 out of one regiment quitted their colours. On the other side, Major-General Browne's men are so mutinous and uncommandable that there is no hope of their stay. They are likewise upon their march home again. Yesterday they were like to have killed their Major-General, and they have hurt him in the face. Such men are only fit for a gallows here and hell hereafter." (2) Fortunately for the unhappy Waller the Cavalier forces were busy elsewhere and he was able to reach Reading unmolested, whence the remnants of his Londoners refused to stir a step except in a homeward direction. With a refreshing forecast of twentieth century soldiers, they complained very bitterly of the billeting accommodation, and one gathers that many were too frail to spend a November night in the open. Poor General Waller! No wonder he wrote: "I detest this war without an enemy."

On both sides even the volunteers were difficult. Each man felt that his primary duty lay in the defence of his own people and countryside. The King's Cornish levies would fight like veterans, and compass almost the impossible on their own soil. Once asked to cross the Tamar, they dissolved and disappeared. Similarly, on the Parliamentary side, even the troops of the County Associations showed a deep reluctance to cross their county boundaries. They reckoned it to be no part of their duty to do more than defend their own parishes, more especially since, as soon as they left them, the unguarded district was raided by the enemy.

There were, however, in the Parliamentary armies a few regiments which could be relied on to be neither homesick nor diffident in action; the nucleus formed by the Cambridgeshire volunteers, Cromwell's regiment, soon to be the cadres of the brigades which broke Rupert's cavalry at Marston Moor and Naseby. These troops, in the early part of the war composed of Independents, fought under the stimulus of a conviction that right, justice and the Gospel were on their side. On the religious discipline of Puritanism was easily superimposed that of military life. The combination was irresistible. Cromwell reveals the secret. "I had rather have a plain russet-coated Captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a Gentleman and is nothing else. . . . If you send me such men as Essex hath sent, it will be to little purpose." (3) It was in the same spirit that he pleaded for religious liberty for his sectarians, antinomians and schismatics, of whom the Parliamentary committee would purge the army. "Honest men served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty; I beseech you, in the name of God, not to dis-

courage them. . . . He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his own conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for." (4)

It took them some time to learn the arts of war; but they were born with that quality, which other civilian armies have lacked, discipline. It was already there; and they had plenty of ministers to inculcate it and to prevent it from being dissipated by the distractions of life in the field. The religious discipline was indeed more constant than the military. " Wednesday morning we had tidings that Prince Rupert, that diabolical Cavalier, had surrounded Leicester and demanded £2000, or else threatened to plunder the town; whereupon our soldiery were even mad to be at them. . . . Friday morning worthy Mr Obadiah Sedgwick gave us worthy sermon, and my company in particular marched to hear him in rank and file. Mr John Sedgwick was appointed to preach in the afternoon, but we had news that Prince Rupert had plundered Marlborough and fired some adjacent towns, and our regiment was immediately drawn into the field. . . . Sabbath-day morning Mr Marshall, that worthy champion of Christ, preached unto us: afternoon, Mr Ash. These with their sermons have already subdued and satisfied more malignant spirits amongst us than a thousand armed men could have done." (5) Two or three figures stand out among the bickering company of Puritan ministers who swarmed in the camps and ran in and out of the conferences of generals. Richard Baxter, but he was too uncompromising for the political leaders: he had entered the war under the delusion that it was being fought to save the King from his advisers; and, when he was disabused, recanted from his allegiance to Cromwell. There is Master Hugh Peters, that " en-

thusiastic buffoon preacher," who after a spell of harrying the aged Laud and exhorting the condemned, had found a congenial occupation as field-preacher, and disseminator of Cromwellian propaganda, "the grand Journey- or Hackneyman of the army," as Col. John Lilburne called him. Peters's forte was the sermon before action; but he was also a notable pillager of captured houses, and a strong reviler of captured enemies. There is Francis Cheynell, who had been conspicuous before the war by his exposition of predestination and his antipathy to ceremonial. Now he had become chaplain to Essex's forces, with which he appears to have combined the functions of tactical expert. He was present at the capture of Arundel in 1643. In the castle, the invaders found Chillingworth, dying and too ill to be moved. Cheynell undertook his case and made the few remaining days of the dying scholar hideous by attempting to wean him from his doctrines. At Chillingworth's burial, he appeared at the grave-side, and casting a copy of *The Religion of Protestants* on to the body, said: "If they please to undertake the burial of his corpse, I shall undertake to bury his errors, which are published in this so much admired yet unworthy book. . . . Get thee gone, thou cursed book, which hast seduced so many precious souls! Get thee gone, thou corrupt rotten book! Earth to earth and dust to dust! get thee gone into the place of rottenness, that thou mayst rot with thy author, and see corruption." (6)

In an army sedulously fed upon the heady wine of revelation by such spiritual directors, it is not surprising that camps and billets soon became debating houses. Presbyterians wrestled with Independents, while Anabaptists railed, and Soul-sleepers and other surprising

sectaries volleyed their creeds. "In this poor Army, wherein great God has vouchsafed to appear! I know not one officer but is in the increasing hand." (7) Nor were the debates confined to religious matters, but embraced the polity of England, Levellers, Fifth Monarchy men, and those who were to become the Diggers, all justifying their particular theories. Baxter gives a vivid picture of Cromwell's forces after Naseby. "When I came to the army, I found a new face of things. I heard the plotting heads very hot upon that which intimated their intention to subvert both Church and State. Independency and Anabaptism were most prevalent: Antinomianism and Arminianism were equally distributed. . . . Abundance of the common troopers and many of the officers, I found to be honest, sober, orthodox men, and others tractable, ready to hear the truth, and of upright intentions. But a few proud, self-conceited, hotheaded sectaries had got into the highest places, and by their very heat and activity bore down the rest, or carried them along with them, and were the soul of the army. . . . They said, What were the Lords of England but William the Conqueror's Colonels? or the Barons but his Majors? or the Knights but his Captains? They plainly showed me, that they thought God's providence would cast the trust of religion and the kingdom upon them as conquerors. They made nothing of all the most wise and most godly in the armies and garrisons, that went not their way. They were far from thinking of a moderate episcopacy, or any healing way between the Episcopal and the Presbyterians. They most honoured the Separatists, Anabaptists and Antinomians. . . . I found that many honest men of weak judgment and little acquaintance with such matters, had been reduced into a disputing vein,

and made it too much of their religion to talk for this opinion and for that; sometimes for State democracy, and sometimes for Church democracy, sometimes against forms of prayers and sometimes against infant baptism . . . sometimes against set times of prayer, and against tying ourselves to any duty before the Spirit move us; and sometimes about Free Grace and Free Will, and all the points of Antinomianism and Arminianism. . . . But their most frequent disputes were for liberty of conscience, as they called it; that is . . . every man might not only hold, but preach and do in matters of religion what he pleased." (8)

That sober Cavalier, Sir Philip Warwick, had already noted the emergence in the stress of war of another strain in the Puritan character, which in succeeding generations was to play a more dominant and aggressive part. " And these men," he writes of the Independents, " habited more to spiritual pride than carnal riot and intemperance, so, having been industrious and active in their former callings and professions, where natural courage wanted, zeal supplied its place; and at first they chose rather to die than fly; and custom removed fear of danger: and afterwards finding the sweet of good pay and opulent plunder and of preferment, suitable to activity and merit; the lucrative part made gain seem to them a natural member of godliness." (9)

Already, therefore, Puritanism was trying unguided to find its own road, and each sect was striving to impress the next into an uniformity only different from Laud's in that it was more severe, and had behind it, not tradition, but the wilfulness of man. Zeal coupled with military success is a delicious but always dangerous liquor. It rouses in the drinker not only arrogance, but also cruelty

of a purposeful and enduring kind. Cruelty is never excusable, but it is less terrible when it is inspired by a momentary passion. Rupert's massacre at Bolton was the product of unthinking impatience. The cold-blooded murder of the Irish women by the Puritan troopers after Naseby, the gashing of the camp-women's faces, is part of the policy of intolerant and intolerable virtue. The massacre at Drogheda, carried out with brutal thoroughness, is not excused, but gloried in by Cromwell as a righteous judgment of God upon barbarous wretches. "And indeed, being in the heat of action, I forbade them to spare any that were in arms in the Town: and, I think, that night they put to the sword about 2000 men. . . . The next day, the other two Towers were summoned . . . but they refused to yield themselves. . . . When they submitted, their officers were knocked on the head; and every tenth man of the soldiers killed; and the rest shipped for Barbados. . . . I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood; and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future. Which are satisfactory grounds to such actions, which otherwise cannot but work remorse and regret. . . . Give me leave to say how it comes to pass that this work is wrought. It was set upon some of our hearts, that a great thing should be done, not by power or might, but by the Spirit of God. And is it not so clearly? That which caused your men to storm so courageously, it was the Spirit of God, who gave your men courage, and took it away again; and gave the enemy courage, and took it away again; and gave your men courage again, and therewith this happy success. And therefore it is good that God alone have all the

Glory." (10) It is not the doing of a dreadful thing which is terrible, but the thought which inspires it.

Of the ultimate outcome of the Civil War, the population of England had at first little inkling. They had enough to do to find protection from their would-be saviours on either side. If Rupert stripped Oxfordshire, or held Leicester to ransom, Essex fed his forces on the sheep and cattle of Devon and Cornwall. If Montrose harried the glens of Argyll, Herefordshire was plundered with exemplary thoroughness by the hungry soldiery of Leven's Covenanting army. Essex, in an ironical letter to Parliament, asked that his men might have the same privileges as Waller's, free quarter, free plunder and contributions. It is little wonder that every now and again a wandering body of either side was done to death by the infuriated peasantry, that the inhabitants of Lostwithiel jeered and threw stones at the disarmed troops of Essex, as it marched away after its surrender of the town. In Dorset, a body of peasantry, groups of labourers, formed themselves into an army of Clubmen, armed with rough staves, " who would not suffer either contributions or victuals to be carried to the Parliament garrison." Fairfax, who met their representatives, temporized and hanged one of his scrounging privates as an act of good faith. Cromwell, meeting them a month later, offered shorter shrift, explaining that the war of the King with Parliament was an affair of such importance that no third party would be permitted. One band refused to disperse and entrenched themselves in the ravelin of an ancient Roman camp on Hambledon Hill. The Lieutenant-General after warning them, set his troops at them, and beat them from their position. " I believe killed not twelve of them, but cut very many. We have taken about

300; many of which are poor silly creatures, whom if you please to let me send home, they promise to be very dutiful for time to come, and will be hanged before they come out again." (11)

The common man had little hope of mercy or of regard for his rights. Being poor, and from the point of view of the leaders of Puritanism and the middle classes, improvident, immoral and godless, destined for Hell, he was a person for whom no thought need be taken. The humble sports of the rabble were idolatrous; their miserable lot their own fault. They could expect to be of little interest to those who were borne up by the spirit and favour of the Almighty. " Plowmen and many others are so wearied or continually employed, either in the labours or cares of their calling, that it is a great impediment to their salvation. Freeholders and tradesmen are the strength of religion and civility in the land. . . . Their constant converse and traffic with London doth much promote civility and piety among tradesmen." (12) So Baxter unconsciously foreshadows the doom of agricultural England. The rising towns with their flourishing trade will breed those stalwarts of religion to resist the passing of the Factory Acts with a perversity worthy of the most inspired prophet of Cromwell's army. In a very few years the common man was to learn the blessings of freedom under " the true church militant,"

> " Such as do build their faith upon
> The holy text of pike and gun,
> Decide all controversies by
> Infallible artillery,
> Call fire and sword and desolation
> A godly thorough reformation."

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Puritans had carried into war, as they had carried into life, the same idea of finality and perfection. Only when no Cavalier dared to admit his loyalty to the throne, only when no Englishman dared to acknowledge the authority of the Church of England or the Church of Rome, only when decency and order on strict Puritan lines prevailed over the whole country, would the end come and the warrior saints doff their harness. The making straight of the path must be carried out with T-square and plumb-line. The final crushing of the Royalists after Naseby and Langport, the executions after the surrender of Colchester, the harassing of rebellious Kent, the trial and removal of Charles I, the Irish massacres, the shooting of the Levellers may be ugly features, but they are the necessary and logical conclusion of the train of thought which had been followed from the day Puritanism coalesced, like masses of inchoate gas, into one flaming star. The path which it followed is clearly traceable. But in its formation there were left swimming in space certain debris which whirled in their own peculiar track apart from the parent constellation.

Though for the Catholic, the Anglican, and the Puritan, the end is identical, his meeting with God, each seeks his end in different fashion. In the belief of the Puritan there was only one state of readiness for that end—self-perfection: and to achieve self-pefection, he blazed out

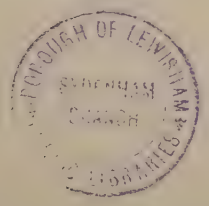
his own road. To find it, he was ready to sacrifice all other considerations. Self-perfection is an arduous task and it can only be accomplished by each man by himself. As he progressed, the Puritan grew to perceive the necessity for freedom, not only of worship, but also of the whole conduct of life. Any restriction hampered him in his great quest. As he gradually obtained freedom, he was able to look back as Christian looked back over the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and to glory in the strength which had brought him lonely through peril. He found in his victory a self-sufficience which enabled him to withstand those whom he conceived to be his enemies; and so, advancing in his new assurance on his path, he came unconsciously to despise those who stood in his way. He repudiated all authority save that imposed by God. Kings with their agents and ministers are but impediments towards the appointed end. Finally, the Puritan emerged in all his religious and political perfection, the convinced republican.

It was with these precepts that Puritanism marched to war. That such a road has many pitfalls is obvious. To follow it without a guide, to ignore the landmarks of past travellers, to reject their advice, is the worst of recklessness. The fathers of Puritanism had marked out the track but few of their successors followed it to the end. Many turned aside, and in their deviation found all the insidious evils, which in the seventeenth century as much as in the twentieth cause men to scoff at or hate a creed which has lost its true savour.

The very virtues of Puritanism carried the germ of self-destroying sickness. In the seventeenth century, the majority of the ordinary Puritans, that is those who reckoned themselves either Presbyterian or Independent,

were still deeply obsessed with the doctrine of predestination. That all save the elect are from birth destined to damnation might appear an ugly creed to those who were not of this sacred body: but the dangers of it are greater to the elect themselves than to those whom they hold to be in peril of Hell-fire. In him who is predestined for Heaven, it breeds not infrequently an arrogance which is impervious to all assaults, physical and spiritual, and a presumptuousness which is proof against the heaviest shafts of reason. It makes him, as John Smith the Platonist, said, "grow big and swell into a mighty bulk, with airy fancies and presumption of being in acceptance with God." (1) The humility which is enjoined upon all men, is by the Puritan only to be observed towards God; towards his fellow men, it is not a virtue but a weakness. The Puritan arrogance and self-assurance are the qualities which not only made Puritans obnoxious to the average man, but which drove them to putting into execution the very persecution they had so furiously protested against in the past, and to carrying it further. Though Presbyterianism and Independency were neither at this time able to overcome the other, they had little mercy for outside bodies. The Star Chamber did not automatically cease to function with the imprisonment of Laud, as the disciples of Anabaptism and Familism found to their cost.

With the King a prisoner and the royalist forces apparently dispersed, the godly reformation was immediately undertaken. It was a difficult task. Not only did so much original sin still linger in the persons of the lower classes; they also felt an antipathy to those who in the name of religion would curtail their scanty privileges at a time when the country was still suffering from the



incidence of the rival armies, and when the crops were failing with a regularity which must surely betoken the anger of the Almighty. The common people cried a plague of all politicians and reformers; but having neither the capacity for combining, nor the armament necessary to enforce a combination, they remained as they would remain for another hundred and fifty years, silent.

The Parliamentary leaders could hardly regard the state of the country with satisfaction or even equanimity. Though they held the King, he was as slippery prisoner as free: and the consideration of his disposal was involved with a number of other restless problems. For one, there was the increasing voice of the Independents in the House. Though they were in a minority, they were nevertheless powerful enough to impose their will on the assembly on occasion, and, if unable to enforce their views, strong enough to make any sweeping measures proposed by the Presbyterians ineffective without certain compensations. Moreover, the Independents had at their back the army, that highly opinionative body. These Prætorians, months of pay in arrears, felt no more tenderness for the politicians than soldiers usually feel. To complicate matters, the Scots army was still in England, waiting for their money and for the enforcement of the Covenant, while the treasury was to all purposes empty. There was matter enough to occupy the attention of Westminster without embarking on a policy of purging: but Zeal-of-the-Land-Busy prevailed.

The sequence of events, the buying off of the Scots, the encroachment of the army upon political life, the execution of ' the Man of Blood,' Pride's Purge, the end of the Rump, and the subsequent Parliaments up to

Monk's resurrection of the Long Parliament in 1659, are facts of political history. What is to be looked at here is the general trend of the Puritan ideal from 1646 to the Restoration and the manner and matter of its strong but partial putting into force.

The Civil War had brought disorder in its train. The country magistracy, never at any time too zealous in its business—Wentworth and Laud had commented in no uncertain terms on its laxness—had fallen into evil ways under the stress of war. The countryside was covered with vagrants and beggars, children of the substratum depicted in Elizabethan Harman's pages. Horse-thieves, disbanded soldiers, turned-away actors and other such characters roamed the roads, adepts in robbery, plundering and cutting throats. Even the better classes were none too orderly. Worsley, Major-General for the north-western counties, as late as 1656 reported that the commissioners for Cheshire " could find near sixty gentlemen in this county—many of them younger sons—that were fit to be sent out of this Commonwealth; which done would much tend to the security thereof and terrify others." (2) The religious disputations of the army were duplicated in all sorts of unexpected civilian groups. New messiahs and unauthorized prophets were continually bobbing up, many of them with missions to the Council, who gravely examined them as to whether their revelations were authentically from God. Antinomian sects caused serious anxiety. The Ranters were much distrusted, since they held no offence to be sinful unless the person who committed it apprehended it to be a sin. In St Paul's, during a sermon on the Resurrection, a lady suddenly divested herself of her clothing, and stark naked, advanced upon the preacher, with a cry of " Welcome the Resur-

rection." George Fox and his Quaker followers caused much perturbation among the government agents by their refusal to acknowledge authority, "doing," one said, "much for the devil, deluding simple souls."

To reduce such a society to order requires patience, impartiality and understanding. "Purity, impartiality, sincerity," were the attributes Cromwell demanded of his Parliament of Saints, the parliament "got together by anxious consultation of the godly Clergy." "These will help you to exercise the judgment of truth." "If I know anything in the world," he went on to say, "what is there likelier to win the people to the interest of Jesus Christ, to the love of Godliness . . . than a humble and godly conversation? So that they may see you love them; you lay yourselves out time and spirits for them! Is not this the likeliest way to bring them to their liberties." (3)

But the Puritan way of going about the business was otherwise than the mild words of Oliver would suggest. An examination of those heavy volumes containing the Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum reveals the remarkable interest taken by the various parliaments in the spiritual welfare of the subject and an equally remarkable lukewarmness in his material interests. Purity and sincerity there may be according to Puritan ideas; impartiality is exceedingly difficult to find. The pages are laden with instructions for the better regulation of the Sabbath, of church government, of unruly and irreligious persons. But with the progress of time, a subtle change comes over the work of Parliament. Not that the invocations of the preambles become less mealy-mouthed: but the instruction is directed less to the propagation of religion and more to the repression of meetings. In the background is the ever-lurking fear of some new plot for

the overthrow of the government and the restoration of the monarchy.

At first, up to the expulsion of the Presbyterians through Pride's Purge, Puritanism is savagely oppressive of any form of worship not prescribed by the House. Under the eyes of the Scots commissioners and the Scots army, the enforcement of the Covenant was unavoidable: but on all sides it was no more popular than the finding of the large sums of money due to these allies. English Presbyterians, that is political Presbyterians, were quite as definite as the Independents in their refusal to put themselves in the power of presbyteries. Milton voiced their sentiment in his rebuke to the "new presbyter":

"Because you have thrown off your prelate lord,
And with stiff vows renounced his liturgy,
To seize the widow'd whore Plurality
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorr'd;
Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword
To force our consciences that Christ set free,
And ride us with a classic hierarchy
Taught ye by mere A.S. and Rotherford?
Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul,
Must now be named and printed hereticks
By shallow Edwards and Scotch what d'ye call."

So Parliament temporized; and, while doing so, found the necessary money to free them from their incubus by the abolition of episcopacy and the sequestration of ecclesiastical lands into the hands of trustees, who held them as security against the first £200,000 due to the Scots. "For the abolishing of Archbishops and Bishops, and providing for the payment of the just and necessary debts of the

kingdom," runs the unusually brief opening to this practical document. Indeed there was no need to elaborate it: for the Church had virtually died on the scaffold with Laud, and this was but the execution of its estate. Nevertheless the hostility to the defunct Church did not wither. Indeed, it seemed all the livelier, as the reformers chased the masters and fellows of Oxford University from their colleges. To a plea for toleration being extended to those who followed the custom of worship by the Book of Common Prayer, the House of Commons returned a negative so decisive that the promoters did not even feel able to contest the point on a division.

To further the reformation, in June, 1647, the House decreed the abolition of festivals, " commonly called Holy Days heretofore superstitiously used and observed," such as Christmas Day, Easter, Whitsuntide. Perhaps, feeling that the common man would not accept such a reform without some compensation, it was ordained that in lieu of those superstitious holidays, every second Tuesday in the month should be set aside for recreation. Here, however, Parliament had outraged popular feeling. On the following Christmas Day, riots broke out in many of the larger towns, where attempts were made by the municipal authorities to carry out the decree. In Canterbury, the mob played football in the streets: and the Mayor, who tried to enforce this lay day, together with a number of the magistracy and clergy, was driven out of the city and the gates barred against him. In London, pulpits and churches were decorated with the customary evergreens, the old form of Common Prayer was used, and officers sent to arrest the culprits and pull down the holly, rosemary and bay, were chased from the streets. (4)

Perhaps the attitude of Puritanism to the abolished

Church of England is best witnessed by the ordinance of 1654 for the ejectment of scandalous and ignorant ministers and schoolmasters. Here, in precisely the same terms as for the offences of fornication, haunting of taverns and disaffection to the government, and so forth, it is laid down that public or frequent use or reading of the Common Prayer Book renders the delinquent unfit for office.

As if to set their seal on the good work, in 1651 Parliament resolved on the destruction of the cathedrals, as being unnecessary, and the sale of the stone and lead to assist the tottering exchequer. A beginning was made at Lichfield, which had been badly battered during the war; but with this, the lust for destruction of the past waned. The carrying out of the proposal was shelved; and, though it was twice revived, the scheme came to nothing.

With the closing of the cathedrals, the choirs had been abolished and the singing men and boys turned off to swell the motley armies of the roads. A few musicians found sanctuary at Oxford; but they were the dying root of English music. When the Restoration came, English music, which had been the admiration of all Europe, was dead. The consorts of viols no longer echoed the native harmonies of Tallis and Byrd. The place they had left empty was assumed by the brisk French fiddle, brought home by the foreign-bred court. From that date, all music in England was imported.

Yet, in spite of all efforts, the power of tradition was stronger than even the will of Puritanism could break. Even in the height of their power, they had not been able to extinguish life completely from the Anglican body. Many of the clergy took the engagement, but continued

to use, if not the book itself, its ceremonial and liturgy, reciting the prayers from memory. As the forces of destruction spent themselves, and men's minds turned to more mundane affairs, a reaction set in against the rigid harshness and unloveliness of Calvinism. Under the wider tolerance of the Independents, the priests of the Church of England began to creep back. Services were held surreptitiously in private rooms and chapels. In 1656, John Evelyn received the Sacrament in a house in Fleet Street and averred that the congregation was "generally much more decent and religious than in our greatest prosperity." (5) Though occasionally a raid was made upon these meeting-places, the activities of the Anglican priests were by now connived at by the authorities, who no longer regarded them with the eyes of fanatics but of politicians.

In addition to the suppression of the older Church, the purification of England largely exercised the minds of the members of the government. Days of fasting and humiliation were frequently imposed on the populace. In the year of the suppression of Christmas, the Lords and Commons, "lest we partake in other men's sins and thereby be in danger to receive of their plagues," and desirous that "both ourselves and the whole Kingdom may be deeply humbled before the Lord," decreed "in hearty and tender compassion," "the 10th March to be set apart for a day of public humiliation for the nation's errors of popery, superstition, heresy, schism and profaneness." (6) A year later, finding that men still remained obdurately in darkness in spite of their leaders' tenderness and compassion for their souls, the House passed the Blasphemy Act, a law savage enough to have won approval from Calvin. For denial of the main Christian tenets,

that of the Holy Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation, either confessed to, or on the evidence of two sworn witnesses, coupled with a refusal to abjure, the penalty was death without benefit of clergy. For lesser offences, such as the publication of the doctrine of Free-will, the holding that the Presbyterial Church of England was no true church, or that infant baptism was unlawful, the punishment was to be imprisonment for life. "This monstrous ordinance," says Professor Gardiner, "was read twice without a division." (7)

Though this conscientious instrument of Christian endeavour was amended in some particulars by a later Blasphemy Act, other ordinances as violent or as irrational were placed upon the Statute Book. In 1650, death was made the penalty for adultery; though it must be admitted that the terms of the ordinance were practically nullified by the action of juries, who, faced with such a sentence hanging over the head of the prisoner, displayed a very natural reluctance to convict.

In the meantime, Parliament had been busy cleansing the country of other odious and unholy habits. In October, 1647, plays and interludes were commanded to be suppressed in the City of London. Four months later, a further Act, the wording of which might have been borrowed from *Histrio-mastix*, for the utter abolition of stage-plays, extended the powers of the magistrates to deal with this evil. Plays are herein said to be "condemned by the ancient Heathen and much less to be tolerated amongst Professors of the Christian Religion": they are the occasion of "many and sundry great vices and disorders, tending to the high provocation of God's wrath and displeasure": all stage players are declared to be "Rogues, and punishable . . . whether they be wanderers

or no." Further the magistrates are required to demolish all stage-galleries, seats and boxes, to cause any players who are caught to be publicly and openly whipped, and on further offence to deal with them as incorrigible rogues, while those who have been present at these lewd entertainments are to be fined five shillings and the money so gathered to be used for the poor of the parish. In their zeal, the reformers next proceeded to deal with the manners and morals of the nation at large. May-poles were denounced as utterly idolatrous and commanded to be destroyed. Church-ales, wakes, morris dances and all the ancient customs of the country were completely suppressed as of abhorrent paganism. The cruel sport of bear-baiting, which in spite of ordinances to the contrary had continued to thrive at Bankside, was finished off by Colonel Pride's company of soldiers, the commanding officer himself slaying the bear with his own sword. It was not humanitarianism which abolished this cruel sport. A tenderness towards animals is not characteristic of an age so little tender towards human beings. Nor was it, as Macaulay has with more justice stated, due to the Puritans' dislike of seeing anyone enjoying himself. It was merely one of those precautions of which there are so many examples in this fearful period, against the collection of crowds and the possibility of riots, or worse, plots. A similar nervousness sent the fighting cocks to the same end as the bears. An ordinance of 1654 prohibited meetings "under the pretence of matches for cock-fighting," which "tend to the disturbance of the public peace and are commonly accompanied with gaming, drinking, swearing and quarrelling and other dissolute practices to the dishonour of God." (8) In the same year, governmental inquietude led to the prohibition of horse

races. To a protest by Lord Exeter, Major-General Whalley answered that he was perfectly agreeable to permit his lordship to run his horses at Lincoln. The prohibition was not designed "to abridge gentlemen of their sport, but to prevent the great confluences of irreconcilable enemies." (9)

Further activities which may be mentioned are the ordinances against the Thames bargees, "Carmen, Porters and Lightermen who . . . are very ordinarily drunk, and do also prophane and blaspheme the Holy Name of God by cursing and swearing to the great dishonour of God, the scandal of the Profession and Professors of the Gospel, and of the present Government:" (10) (Strangely enough, the object of the intended suppression seems to have survived the condemnation of the Commons): and, in the country, against poaching of both game and fish, "tracking of hares in the snow, setting dogs and other unlawful means to kill and destroy the game"; while vagrants and wandering idle dissolute persons, "commonly called Fidlers or Minstrels, taken playing and making music in any inn, ale-house or tavern," were to be adjudged rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars, and treated accordingly.

To carry out these suppressions of the ordinary pleasures of the lower classes, extraordinary powers were granted to the executive officers. But it is one thing to arrest the profane, the drunken and the dissolute, quite another to reform him. Presently the gaols were crowded to overflowing with the victims of the social inquisition; and much consternation was caused by the amount of money it cost the country to keep them safe. After some hesitation, the Council resolved on transportation to the colonies as a practical and remunerative solution.

In the meantime, the Major-Generals were busily engaged in putting down the ale-houses with thoroughness and severity. This action was no doubt very salutary and did much to facilitate the clearing of the vagabond-infested roads. But at the same time, the ale-house was the only place of amusement for the poor, and the Protectorate, except for the grant of the one day's holiday a month in place of the customary saints' days, had little care or kindness for the lower classes. If one turns to the Act for the better Observance of the Lord's Day, of 1657, one finds a list of recreations forbidden, which is staggering in its wholesale condemnation of amusement. Besides the normal and not improper suppression of gaming, 'tipling' and bear- or bull-baiting, the following profane pleasures are stringently denied to the people—dancing, profane (*i.e.* secular) songs, playing musical instruments, wrestling, leaping, running, shooting, ringing of bells for pleasure, unnecessary walking in the churchyard or the church in times of public worship, "vainly and profanely walking." Beyond this, wakes, feasts, church-ales, which had from immemorial time been the means of raising money for the church, and had been a part of the life of the people, were utterly swept away. The rabble were to know who were the new masters of England. In place of their older sports, the Puritans offered nothing save the crushing ministrations of their clergy, a strenuous disciplining in theology, such as is described by Baxter. "Every Thursday evening my neighbours that were most desirous and had opportunity met at my house, and there one of them repeated the sermon, and afterwards they proposed what doubts any of them had about the sermon, or any case of conscience, and I resolved their doubts; and last of all I prayed with them myself, which beside

singing a psalm was all they did. And once a week also some of the younger sort who were not fit to pray in so great an assembly met among a few, more privately, where they spent three hours in prayer together. Every Saturday night they met at some of their houses to repeat the sermon of the last Lord's Day, and to prepare themselves for the following day. Once in a few weeks we had a day of humiliation on one occasion or other. Every religious woman that was safely delivered—instead of the feast and gossipings—did keep a day for thanksgiving with some of their neighbours with them, praising God and singing Psalms, and soberly feasting together. Two days every week my assistant and myself took 14 families between us for private Catechism." (11) Yet Baxter would have, had it been possible, increased the disciplinary powers of the parish minister.

The idea which lies behind the repressive legislation of Puritanism is, in fact, quite other than religious. It is the idea, the central idea, of order; and to the minds of the leaders order could only be achieved by uniformity. The uniformity which they proposed was in religion less wide than that offered by the old Church of England, while in social matters it was infinitely less tolerant than had been thought desirable under the monarchy. The ideal state, as the Puritans saw it, was one in which the proper functions of man, labour and progress, marched unchecked by arbitrary government or state control, but in which any deviation from those principles, even in pursuit of that beloved phantom, liberty, must be firmly repressed. The Puritan, to bring his ideals into being, allowed himself to resort to the very forces which he had so fervently condemned before 1640. Order in a state can in reality only be obtained by the tacit consent of all classes: and

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that consent can only be gained through the happiness and prosperity of the governed. Happiness, the Puritan government was unable to give. Severely harassed by the urgent necessity of finding money, its immediate action was to increase taxation, and then to increase it again. Possessing an instrument of taxation which Charles had never possessed, it used it with ever increasing pressure, while it backed its demands with the menace of its standing army, a weapon also denied to its predecessors. The sequestration of royalist estates, the heavy fines levied in compensation of claims against the King's adherents, the sale of the royal pictures, are not merely wilful revenges upon fallen enemies, but the result of the ever growing needs of the exchequer to keep the government's strongest weapon, the army, from crumbling to pieces.

Unable to claim the goodwill of the country by the prosperity of its régime, the government was forced, in pursuit of its policy of re-establishing order, to have recourse to the curtailment of the subject's liberties. But the moral reformation which they contemplated was not to be obtained by forcible methods. The result of their policy of 'frightfulness' was not to amend the character of the people against whom they proceeded, but merely to cause the vices which they wished to eradicate to disappear under ground. The natural energies which they sought to discipline waxed in secret, and took different and less pleasant forms in hiding. The licentiousness of which the Restoration is accused, was bred less by the natural depravity of those conspicuous figures who prance through the pages of Pepys and Count Hamilton, than by the blocking up of the natural outlets to man's needs by the Protectorate parliaments. Yet the projectors of this strong moral reformation should have known what

the effects of their action would be. The evils of the theocratical intolerance of the Scottish ministry were well known to Cromwell. " I thought I should have found in Scotland a conscientious People," he had written to the Lord President of the Council in 1650, " and a barren country: about Edinburgh, it is as fertile for corn as any part of England; but the People generally are so given to lying and frequent swearing as is incredible to be believed."(12) " It is usual with them," commented one of Cromwell's army, " to talk religiously and with a great show of piety and devotion for a time, and the next moment to lie, curse and swear without any manner of bounds or limits. . . . For the sins of adultery and fornication, they are as common amongst them as if there were no commandment against either. They call those only broken women that have had but six bastards." (13) The experience of this church-disciplined people should have been a warning; but the Protector did not read the lesson. Only a year or so later, the city fathers of London were seriously occupied by the increase in the murders of bastard children by their mothers. In 1658, so grievous had the situation become, that polygamy was gravely considered as a solution by the Puritan parliament. The proposer of the scheme considered that polygamy would bring many converts from Popery. " You shall want no other ram," he said, " to batter the walls of Rome." (14)

The constructive side of the policy of the Protectorate Council and executive amply demonstrate their indifference towards the claims of poverty and their abandonment of the ideas of their forerunners. True, there was the Act of 1649 for the relief of prisoners for debt: the insolvent creditor who could not show £5 in his possession and the tools of his trade was no longer thrust into the beggars'

ward of the gaols to die; but given his liberty, though this liberty might reserve him for as hard a fate as that which he had escaped. This mercy was not, however, extended to any adherents of the Cavalier interest. One may even hazard that the reasons for this Act were less humanitarian than expedient. Not only were the debtors' prisons the breeding houses of the plague; they were required for other victims of the penal laws.

The Act for the relief of poor prisoners is the solitary action of leniency towards the unfortunate. In other directions their position had become far worse. The administration of the Poor Laws, which the royal tyranny had attempted to put on a sound footing, became completely disorganized during the war. In the hurry of more pressing matters, the old custom of putting the active poor to work had been neglected. The calling up of all men between the ages of 16 and 60 for service in the armies had removed from many districts the necessity of providing for any but the impotent. The stocks of money and material had disappeared with the disappearance of the necessity for their provision. The local officers, the overseers and the constables, had become both tax collectors and distributors of charity; they found it far easier to disburse moneys than to provide work for the able-bodied workless. In this way the machinery of the parish administration had fallen idle and decayed. The disbanding of the armies had much the same effect upon the country as the demobilization of 1919 had upon Great Britain. Thousands of able-bodied men were suddenly thrown upon the world to live as they could find work. In a word, the poor had returned, and there were no means for their subsistence. The country was staggering under the financial burdens imposed by the victory of

the middle classes; and employment was rare. Before the war, the administration of the Poor Laws had been in the hands of the justices of peace. In the rending of the social fabric, many of the older gentry had disappeared, either through death or exile, while others were disgraced and ruined by government sequestration. The inheritors of their position in the State looked on the poor with different eyes from their predecessors. In the light of their own successes, they no longer looked upon poverty as an inevitable evil in the commonwealth, a stigma to be wiped out by the best means in the country's power. It was an evil, certainly; but one which the victim had brought upon himself by his own sins. The Commonwealth government was less insistent than the King's Council had been on its remedy or palliation: its active measures in the cause of order were reflected in the magistracy. It became the practice to discourage unemployment rather by the enforcement of justice than by the provision of work. " The general rule of all England is to whip and punish the wandering beggars . . . and so many justices execute one branch of that good Statute (which is in point of justice), but as for the point of charity they leave it undone, which is to provide houses and convenient places to set the poor to work." (15) This remedy appears to have had little effect upon the problem. Pauperism continued to increase. The decline in private charity was patent. One contemporary ascribed it to the lack of small change. " Many aged and impotent poor and others that would work and cannot get employment, are deprived of many alms for want of farthings and half farthings: for many would give a farthing who are not disposed to give a penny or twopence, or to lose time in staying to change the money whereby they may contract

a noisome smell or the disease of the poor." (16) The City of London was thronged with beggars who pursued citizens from the church to their houses, or hung on the steps of their coaches, begging for charity.

Every now and then, the government, in great concern, passed a resolution, and fathered some novel scheme upon the reluctant city. The Corporation of the Poor was founded in London to erect work-houses and houses of correction for the purpose of employing the workless, with orphanage and all complete. But the scheme did not thrive. Money for stock was not forthcoming; and the orphans were left uneducated. Other committees were called by the Council for the consideration of the matter; but their recommendations and resolutions were of the nature of pious hopes rather than serious beliefs in any cure being accomplished. Such matters are usually overlooked in times of political excitement, as is pointed by *The Poor Outcast Children's Song and Cry*, printed in 1653:

> " Grave Senators that sit on high,
> Let not poor English children die,
> And droop on Dunghills with lamenting notes;
> An Act for Poor's Relief, they say,
> Is coming forth; why's this delay?
> O let not Dutch, Danes, Devil stop those
> Votes." (17)

The writer did not anticipate the actual measures for relief. The Vagrancy Act of 1657 provided that any person arrested on the roads, who could not show visible means of subsistence, was to be treated as a sturdy beggar, whether actually begging or not.

The reason for the decline in the revenue of charitable institutions, stressed by contemporary writers, is the new

attitude towards poverty, the attitude of the victorious classes. "Very few legacies are now given to hospitals," wrote the Governors of Christ's Hospital in 1645, "the rents and revenues thereunto belonging being also very ill paid by the tenants." Though this was no doubt due to the exigencies of the war, the state of the hospital's revenues were as bad eight years later. The reason was that the old type of wealthy man, who considered it part of his duty to his God to make charitable benefactions, had given way to the new and more godly plutocrat, who stood in his shoes and squatted on his estate, and who considered alms-giving not only an attempt to achieve Heaven by bribery, but also as an encouragement to the dissolute and the idle. A far safer and more profitable remedy would, he considered, be found in the transportation of these souls to our newly-won colonies, where they would not only cease to be a burden to the mother country, but in due time under the direction of the well-qualified slave drivers of Barbados and Jamaica might even become a source of revenue, provided, of course, that they did not die. The panacea for the resurrection of trade and the resolution of our present problem of unemployment, recently offered by many worthy parliamentarians, is another instance of the prophetic wisdom of our Puritan forefathers.

The ingenious remedy of apprehending superfluous citizens and transporting them to foreign parts, "where they may earn their living by labor," had been devised after Worcester fight for the cleansing of the country of malignants and prisoners. It was later extended to include a number of other undesirable categories. Transportation did not imply slavery—far from it; only a matter of four, five or seven years indenture to a planter. But in fact the unhappy exiles were considerably worse off under this

system than if they had been slaves. A slave was valuable property. A working hand of whose services a master had but five years' use was a highly perishable commodity to be used to its utmost during its term of service.

The ship-master who undertook the conveyance of these unfortunates, was permitted to reimburse himself for the passage by what he could get for the passengers at Barbados, or whatever plantation he was working to. The goods were "locked under deck—and guards—among horses, that their souls through heat and steam under the tropic fainted in them." (18) On arrival, the vessel was thronged with merchants in search of servants. "The master of the ship sold your miserable petitioner and others . . . for 1550 pounds weight of sugar apiece . . . as goods and chattels . . . neither sparing the aged of three score years old, nor divines, nor officers, nor gentlemen, nor any age or condition of men." (19) Hereafter they were kept "in the most insupportable captivity, they now generally grinding at the mills, attending the furnaces, or digging in the scorching island; having nought to feed on—notwithstanding their hard labour—but potato roots, nor to drink but water with such roots washed in it—besides the bread and tears of their own afflictions—being bought and sold still from one planter to another, or attached as horse and beasts for the debts of their masters, being whipped at their whipping posts as rogues for their masters' pleasure, and sleeping in styes worse than the hogs in England, and many other ways made miserable beyond expression or Christian imagination." (20)

"The slaves and their posterity," sums up another critic, "being subject to their masters for ever, are kept and preserved with greater care than the servants who are there for five years."

By such methods were the West India and some of the American plantations provided with the necessary labour. Nor was the scheme confined to the male sex only. Women were to be induced to seek their fortunes in like manner, either by force or persuasion.

After the Act for the Settlement of Ireland, perhaps the darkest blot on Commonwealth legislation, the administration contemplated settling the newly captured island of Jamaica with a thousand boys and a thousand girls of under fourteen from Ireland. Jamaica was the most notorious of all the plantations. The troops and the first English settlers had died off like flies, dropping dead as they went about their work. The widows of soldiers preferred to sell themselves into slavery on other islands rather than remain in so devilish a spot. To this vile place the Protectorate planned to send their child colonists. "Concerning the young women," writes one tender soul, "although we must use force in taking them up, yet it being so much for their own good, and likely to be of so great advantage to the public, it is not in the least doubted that you shall have such number as you shall think fit to make use of upon this account." (21) One wonders whether the benefit of the children or of the public was uppermost in Henry Cromwell's mind as he penned this ingenuous letter. Almost at the same time, a raid upon the stews of London had provided the administration with 400 superfluous women. These also were considered suitable emigrants for Jamaica, a whore, it being found, making a very ready wife, if she be handsome enough. One is glad to think that probably neither of these profitable transactions was actually carried out, the failure not however being due to any stirring of conscience on the part of the devisers—an Order in Council was passed

for the shipment—but owing to their being overlooked in the pressure of business.

In two places only did the apostles of Puritanism fail to reduce their enemies, in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The latter had been purged, it was thought, though the newly installed masters in the end proved themselves the disciples of humanism rather than of the creed which had put them in. At Oxford it is a different story.

After ' Old Subtlety's ' raid in the early months of the war, the city and university had escaped the first passionate outburst of reform. When on the King's defeat it surrendered, Parliament intended to cleanse it as it had cleansed that other nest of malignancy, Cambridge. Oxford had been the headquarters of the royal cause for so long that it was bound to be deeply tainted with all the infections born of the Man of Blood. At only two colleges (Merton and Lincoln) was there even a tinge of Puritanism. Oxford opened its gates to Fairfax in June, 1646, and to the articles of surrender, which allowed the university to enjoy all its customs and privileges, the victorious general had added the proviso that Parliament should have the right, if it so desired, to reform the administration. The university was in no position to defend itself. Its treasuries had been emptied in the King's cause; the colleges had fallen into disrepair; the libraries had been pilfered, and the undergraduates were " much debauched and become idle by their bearing arms and keeping company with rude soldiers." (22) The first move of Parliament was to despatch seven Presbyterian ministers, one of whom was Chillingworth's old enemy, Cheynell, to preach the word and to prepare the way for a Visitation. Unfortunately for them, their

appearance was resented, not only by the old royalists, but by numbers of Independents and other sectaries, who were in the city, and who opposed the Presbyterian preaching with overpreaching. After nearly a year, Parliament at length put their threat into execution and despatched to Oxford 24 Visitors under the leadership of Sir Nicholas Brent, who had been Warden of Merton, but had been displaced by the King on account of his Puritan leanings. Though it could not win, the university put up a remarkably good fight under the circumstances. The Visitors had ordained a convocation of the Vice-Chancellor, Samuel Fell of Christ Church, and the doctors, to meet them between 9 and 11 on the 4th June: but, a mutiny breaking out among the soldiers of the garrison, they delayed their arrival until the morning of the appointed day. Their first business was to fortify themselves with a sermon, but the preacher did not cease from prophesying until nearly 11 o'clock. As the Visitors entered the door of the Convocation House, they were astonished to be greeted by shouts of "Stand aside! Room for Mr Vice-Chancellor." Hastily drawing back, they were passed by a procession of the whole of Convocation departing, headed by Dean Fell, who, removing his cap to the baffled visitation, remarked, "Good morning, gentlemen, 'tis past eleven o'clock," and passed on his way.

Such tactics could only have one end. But they did allow the university a respite and an opportunity to the delegates appointed by Convocation to state their case, a breathing space for preparation. Fell, Sheldon (*a*), Hammond (*b*), Morley (*c*), and Sanderson (*d*) drew up

(*a*) Warden of All Souls. (*b*) Canon of Christ Church and Public Orator. (*c*) Canon of Christ Church, later Bishop of Winchester. (*d*) Regius Professor of Divinity.

a list of " Reasons of the University " for not accepting the tests to be imposed upon them, in which they expressed their loyalty to the principles of the Church of England and their repudiation of the Covenant.

After some months' parley, the Visitors took the extreme step of arresting Fell, since he had refused even by appearing to acknowledge the presence of the Visitors. Even so the university officials clung to their legal position, refusing to submit to the Visitors' demands that they should hand over the college books; while the minor officers backed the fellows nobly by refusing to surrender any of their insignia of office.

At last, forced by the absurdity of their position, the Visitors had recourse to Parliament, and, after long argument, returned to Oxford with plenary powers under the leadership of the Earl of Pembroke, the ardent pursuer of Laud, who was described as " so foul mouthed and so eloquent in swearing that he was thought more fit to preside a Bedlam than a learned academy." Under the guidance of this savoury personage, the dragooning of the fellows and masters commenced. The champions of the university, Fell and his associates, were the first to be evicted, though Mrs Fell stood a siege in Christ Church Deanery for some time, until eventually carried out chair and all. With the leaders went a host of lesser men, among whom here and there is to be recognized the name of some great scholar or divine. The test applied was simple: whether the victim was prepared to submit to the authority of Parliament, and to observe the Directory for Worship. Helpless as they were to resist, yet the majority of the masters refused the offer. Beyond this, certain offenders were subjected to an inquisition into their conduct; for one, Mr Henry Tozer, sub-rector

but virtually head of Exeter College, and a stout royalist, to whom the following series of questions, among others, was put.

" 4. Whether you did not check and revile Mr Jo. Mathews of Exeter College for not coming to Common Prayer?

" 5. Why you permit Mr Polewhele, a scandalous person and a man of blood, to enjoy the profits of his place at Exeter College?

" 6. Why do you connive at the notorious miscarriages of Teige, your servitor?

" 9. Why you discouraged Braine, an ingenious youth of tender conscience, when he expressed his zeal against superstition?

" 10. Why you did not punish Bridgood and others for drinking healths to the confusion of reformers?

" 11. Why you contemned the Order of the Visitors for proroguing term, and permitted ingenious youths to be sconced for observing the Order aforesaid." (23)

The reformation was extended from the highest to the lowest. A table of undergraduates in Christ Church hall was put out of commons for a week because they drank the King's health, standing up and bareheaded. The cook of Trinity College was suspended because " (i) that he often said: that the Reformation intended by the Visitors was a deformation; (ii) that he often drinks in the cellar of the College more than he puts on for in the buttery book." (24) One would like to know which of the charges preferred had a more persuasive influence with the Visitors.

Gradually the university was brought down. Its loyalty

had nearly ruined it: many fellowships were suppressed, and endowments diverted, to provide subsistence for the new masters. The fanatic Cheynell was given Laud's college, St John's, and his stipend increased by the transfer to him of the income from a legacy for the maintenance of the choir and library, the Visitors holding that the legatee's intention would be better fulfilled and God much honoured if Cheynell were to expound the scripture or to catechize the youth of the college in return for his gratuity. The masterships of other colleges were given to a number of Puritan divines; Goodwin, the fantastic protagonist of Addison's essay, had Magdalen, one of the most royalist of all colleges, Reynolds had the House, and so forth. Oxford appeared to be sufficiently coerced, when in 1649, Fairfax and Cromwell were indued by their grateful clients with the gorgeous robes of the Doctorate of Civil Law, dined at Magdalen and played bowls on the college lawn. Two years later the reformed university made the great man Chancellor.

The reformation might have seemed complete: but Oxford exercises a strange fascination even upon her adopted children. In a very short time, Reynolds, now Vice-Chancellor, found himself unable conscientiously to accept the Engagement. He was dismissed, and after a stop-gap, his place was filled by the athletic and rigorous John Owen. And Owen, too, though a staunch Independent, was lenient enough to allow Episcopalians to hold their services in spite of the ordinances of the outer world. With Reynolds' departure, there was an even more curious defection: Cheynell, from conscience, was also driven to refuse the test, and departed rather than forswear himself.

Slowly the finances of the university began to mend

and corporate life to reassert itself. But Oxford and Cambridge still had enemies. In 1653, the Patronage Bill gave an excuse for a wild attack in the Commons on both, when amid other charges, it was preferred that they were useless to produce spiritual ministers of religion, and should be dissolved, a strange charge against the schools which had trained not only a Morley, a Sanderson, a Stillingfleet and a Fuller, but also a Whichcote, a Cudworth and a John Smith. Milton and his friends clamoured for the suppression. But the Chancellor stood firm. He, too, had been touched by the same unanalysable sympathy as had been Reynolds and Cheynell, and had learned that " real affection " of which he spoke when he resigned the office in 1657.

Against the cliffs of wisdom and toleration, the waves of doctrinism and dogmatism had beaten in vain. Oxford is called the home of lost causes; but no cause, which is followed for immaterial ends, is ever quite lost. Like the fires round the Essen foundries, it may be smothered, driven down beneath the earth, but it burns still with an unquenchable flame, to break out again to the confusion of the firemen.

The main stream of Puritanism was already dividing. Long before the Restoration, there is a steep bank rising between two branches, the humanist and the practical. The former found its bed in the thought of the Cambridge Platonists. Practical Puritanism turned in another direction.

Success had for a long time been the touchstone of the practical man. God's mercy towards him was vouchsafed by material blessings. If he failed in his enterprises, he must redouble his prayers. After the disasters of the expeditions to Hispaniola and Jamaica in 1655, disasters

brought about largely by his own mismanagement and lack of foresight, Cromwell wrote to Goodson: "We doubt we have provoked the Lord: and it is good for us to know and to be abased for the same. But yet certainly His name is concerned in the work: and therefore we should, and I hope do, lay our mouths in the dust. Yet he would not have us despond, but I trust give us leave to make mention of His name and of His righteousness when we cannot make mention of our own. You are left then: and I pray you set up your banners in the name of Christ: for undoubtedly it is His Cause." (25) The holy cause, it is but fair to mention, was "the securing of the interest we already have in those countries [the West Indies] which now lie open and exposed to the will and power of the King of Spain who claims the same by colour of a donation of the Pope . . . and also for getting ground and gaining upon the dominions and territories of the said King there" (26); also incidentally for sacking the treasure fleet of Spain, with whom this country was nominally at peace. It is pleasant when religion and policy play so gently into each other's hands.

Under the practical regime of the Protectorate, England became harder and more cruel than it had been since the Wars of the Roses. If physical torture was no longer employed, mental and spiritual were even more effective. In the smothering of ancient customs, in the ruin of the Church of England, the one politically moral force in the country, the Puritans produced a devastated spiritual area as thorough as the guns of the English and German armies upon the valleys of the Somme. They broke down a tradition which had resisted their creed, a tradition in which the State is one indivisible whole made up of the three estates, each dependent on the others, a society in

which the rich and poor live side by side, each possessing rights and duties towards the other. In the place of this, they created their own conception of State and society where efficiency and success are the visible tests of virtue.

Yet the real achievements of Puritanism are not lightly to be set aside. Even if the Puritans planted the seeds of economic licence, they sowed at the same season the seeds of political freedom. By their gospel of personal rectitude and of the value of labour, they established England as a nation of shopkeepers before any other nation save the Dutch, whom they subdued from purely self-seeking and commercial motives. By the virtues of their creed they laid the foundations of an empire spanning the world.

Only in doing so, they slew something which might in the end have proved of greater value to their descendants. The arrogance bred by their success drove out the spiritual values which the fathers of Puritanism themselves had so prized, and on which their victory was founded. The spiritual values of Godliness and liberty survived merely as signs over the shop door, a relic of the original founders of the business, which did

> " by industrious valour climb
> To ruin the great work of Time
> And cast the kingdoms old
> Into another mold."

CHAPTER NINE

(i)

The middle years of the seventeenth century are prolific of heavy showers of printed matter. If, during the Civil War and under the Protectorate, the light clouds of drama and secular poetry were blown out of the sky, it was only to make way for the heavy thunderstorms of theoretical and dogmatic writing. Though this hardly compensates for the loss to literature, it is at least a testimony to the active minds and industrious pens of the writers. To track one's way through the primeval forest of tracts, pamphlets, discoveries, perfect proceedings, sermons, exhortations and denunciations, dealing with politics, economics, and religion is a distracting task, and made none the easier by the 'dark and high' language of the controversialists, not to speak of the freedom of their invective. Behind the veil of abuse, such as that which masks the ideas of John Lilburne, it is often impossible to discover a single thought beyond the villainy of his opponents. In a long treatise on dogma, it is frequently difficult to find the root idea which impelled the writer. As Baxter said of the younger Vane, their creeds are "so childishly formed and expressed that few could understand them" (though at the same time it must not be denied that Baxter was so intolerant of views other than his own that he scarcely troubled to attempt the task of following them).

Yet in spite of their obscurity and polemical bitterness, the literature of the times is a bed of sprouting ideas, many doomed to die, some because they were too far in advance of their day, others after a passing admiration. In a few will be found something of the best of Puritan England: in the rest, the worst.

Over the whole period, the shadow of Milton sprawls its huge bulk. Yet, save as the pure poet, Milton is far less interesting than many other lesser lights. Milton never came to terms with common life: he moved in a more spacious world than that of the men who employed him. When he was turned to the narrow sphere of earthly designs, his spirit drooped and grew ill at ease; and his thought degenerated. How tenderly his reasoning limps in his uninspired *Eikonoklastes* beside the sweeping march of *Areopagitica*. When he was asked to reply to Lilburne, he frankly refused the office. His weapons were too fine to cope with Freeborn John's cudgels of abuse: moreover, he felt with the adversary whom he was called on to combat a sympathy in the idealism which Lilburne so frantically voiced. The freedom in worldly affairs which Lilburne preached was the visible counterpart of the freedom of the spirit which Milton demanded. Milton is the purest republican, owing nothing to any man but himself. His career as a thinker is built step by step to this plane. First the ardent apostle of political freedom, he is heart and soul with the anti-royal party. Though his famous defence of liberty was prompted by the suppression of his own pleaded cause in favour of divorce, the pages of the *Areopagitica* are laden with a nobler emotion than that of personal pique. " We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of man, how we spill that reasoned life of

man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of Reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life." The words are more than a plea for an immediate object: their appeal is beyond the views of utilitarians and empiricists. The author claims the right of every man to pursue his thought to the ultimate point. "The light which we have gained was given us not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge." Milton's vision of the nation is outside the strategies of the parties striving to impose their wills upon their enemy. "Consider what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors: a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious and piercing spirit; acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. . . . Now once again by all the concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself; what does he then but reveal himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his Englishmen? I say, as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the manner of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast city, a city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of

beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas, wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching Reformation; others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement.

"What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of sages, and of worthies? We reckon more than five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks; had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already."

In spite of his preoccupation with the divine, the most impassioned and greatest of Milton's verse is to be found in the speeches of the rebellious, undefeated Satan in *Paradise Lost*. It is once more the mystic speculator striving against the shackles which detain him. As Milton gradually shrank back from the uncouth and abrupt finality of the doctrine of Predestination, so unconsciously he strove to break through to beyond the point which his own conception of the Godhead had imposed on him. The doctrine of free will strengthened the wings on which he soared to his greatest heights.

The philosophy of Milton, lonely voyager in the regions of the sublime, was not of the kind, save by its popular expression, to appeal to his generation. His soul was too big for earthly interests. His philosophy, disguised and muffled in his verse, conveyed little beyond the majesty of the story to them that read it. Like his pupil Marvell, he too may have thought that the cause was too good to be fought for. There were better means of achieving the end.

It is among the less famous, but not less cultivated minds that the vital philosophies of Puritanism must be sought. The school of humanists who are known as the Cambridge Platonists, if they had little effect upon the ruck of Puritanism and no influence upon events, stand apart as the ripest vintage these years brought forth. The highest literature rarely represents the trend of mind of its own generation; sometimes not even of succeeding ones. The Cambridge Platonists, a few isolated masters of colleges, produced in their sermons and writings all that spiritual Puritanism had meant to strive for: but Puritanism, blinded by doctrine and by hurrying events, could only admire, not follow the men who might have led it into a wider field of thought than the sterile wilderness into which so many retired.

The group was confined chiefly to those fellows of Emmanuel who, being Puritan by conviction, escaped Manchester's and Cromwell's great purge of Cambridge in 1644: but though they were raised to the mastership of colleges, they were completely out of sympathy with the narrowness of the common Puritan—Independent or Presbyterian—divine. "Being disgusted with the dry systematical way of these times," says Burnet of Benjamin Whichcote, "he studied to raise those who conversed with him to a nobler set of thoughts, and to consider religion as a seed of a deiform nature." (1) Highly educated, spiritually minded, they avoided the hard dogmatism of Calvin's followers, and approached the problem of the Christian life from a different angle. "I have not read many books," wrote Whichcote; "but I have studied a few: meditation and invention hath been my life rather than reading. . . . I have always expected reason for what men say." (2) True humanists, they insisted not

on the fundamental depravity, but on the natural goodness of mankind. In contradistinction to the conventional Puritan minister of the Independent or Presbyterian breed, the Platonists held that God is in man from the beginning, that the human soul "is of a most noble extraction, of an heavenly and divine pedigree," that man, by the very fact of his existence, partakes of the divine spirit. Man is not the seed of God, but the seed of God is in man. The very beautiful passage in Traherne's *Centuries of Meditations* illustrates this central tenet of the Platonist school, the primal and divine innocence of the soul.

"Certainly Adam in Paradise had not more sweet and curious apprehensions than I when I was a child.

"All appeared new, and strange at first, inexpressibly rare and delightful and beautiful. I was a little stranger, which at my entrance into the world was saluted and surrounded with innumerable joys. My knowledge was Divine. I knew by intuition those things which since my Apostasy, I collected again by the highest reason. My very ignorance was advantageous. I seemed as one brought into the Estate of Innocence. All things were spotless and pure and glorious: yea, and infinitely mine, and joyful and precious. I knew not that there were any sins, or complaints or laws. I dreamed not of poverties, contentions or vices. All tears and quarrels were hidden from mine eyes. Everything was at rest, free and immortal. I knew nothing of sickness or death or rents or exaction, either for tribute or bread. In the absence of these I was entertained like an Angel with the works of God in their splendour and glory, I saw all in the peace of Eden; Heaven and Earth did sing my Creator's praises, and could not make more melody to Adam than

to me. All time was eternity and a perpetual Sabbath. Is it not strange that an infant should be heir of the whole World, and see those mysteries which the books of the learned never unfold?

"The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold: the gates were at first the end of the world. The green trees when I saw them first through one of the gates transported and ravished me, their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstasy, they were such strange and wonderful things. The Men! O what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem! Immortal Cherubims! And young men glittering and sparkling Angels, and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty! Boys and girls, tumbling in the street, and playing, were moving jewels. I knew not that they were born or should die; But all things abided eternally as they were in their proper places. Eternity was manifest in the Light of the Day, and something infinite behind everything appeared: which talked with my expectation and moved my desire. The city seemed to stand in Eden, or to be built in Heaven. The streets were mine, the temple was mine, the people were mine, their clothes and gold and silver were mine, as much as their sparkling eyes, fair skins and ruddy faces. The skies were mine, and so were the sun and moon and stars, and all the World was mine; and I the only spectator and enjoyer of it. I knew no churlish proprieties, nor bounds, nor divisions: but all proprieties and divisions were mine: all treasures and the possessors of them. So that with much ado I was corrupted, and made to learn the dirty devices of

this world. Which now I unlearn and become, as it were, a little child again that I may enter into the Kingdom of God." (3)

The distance of this passage from the destructive vituperation of a Prynne or an Edwards is the span from Heaven to Hell.

Reason is the Platonist's only standard, reason opposed to doctrine. By this alone is the divine inner light of man's soul fed and strengthened. "Religion is intelligible, rational and accountable: it is not a burden but a privilege," says Whichcote. The Platonist refuses all dealings with hard and fast dogma, "legalized Gospel," as John Smith calls it. "Our Saviour, who is the great master of Divine truth, would not, while He was here on earth, draw it up into any system or body, nor would His disciples after Him; He would not lay it out to us in any canons or articles of belief, not being indeed so careful to stock and enrich the world with opinions and notions, as with true piety, and a Godlike pattern of purity, as the best way to thrive in all spiritual understanding." (4) The sentence but for the style might almost come from the mouth of Chillingworth. It is man, and man alone, the Platonist reiterates, who can achieve the life of a Christian. He carries the capacity for Heaven in his own heart. "It was by reason of this self-will that Adam fell in Paradise; that those glorious angels, those morning stars, kept not their first stations, but dropped down from Heaven like falling stars, and sank into this condition of bitterness, anxiety and wretchedness in which they now are." (5) The members of the House of Commons who passed a vote of thanks to Cudworth for the sermon from which these words are taken, did not, we may be sure, reflect on the obvious parallel to their own state.

There was little chance that these faint isolated voices would be heard above the harsher brass of the fanatics. Their reasonableness, their moderation and their basis of scholarship were too ethereal to be grasped by the warring sects, or those occupied in attempting to compromise. But by curious circumstance, there was one sect, accounted of little importance—lunatic rabble, their contemporaries held them—simultaneously rising at the other pole of society, whose views were almost in complete harmony with those of the Cambridge group, but who had arrived at their position, not through reason or learning, but by what they knew to be divine inspiration itself. This sect is the Quakers, a body held by the Council to be almost the most dangerous in the country. "They make the light which every man hath within him to be his sufficient rule, and consequently the Scripture and Ministry are set light by," says the horrified Baxter. (6) "They speak much for the dwelling and working of the Spirit in us; but little of Justification and Pardon of Sin, and our Reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. They pretend their dependence on the Spirit's conduct, against set times of prayer, and against Sacraments and against the due esteem of Scripture and ministry." That the Quakers were, in fact, more tolerant and in closer sympathy with the ideals of the best minds of Puritanism than were the Presbyterians, the Independents or the low Anglican ministers, may possibly have added to the odium in which they were held.

For even the moderate Puritan of the better type was as much enamoured of uniformity as Laud. "There could never be a Sect arise in the world (than the Ranters) that was a louder warning to professors of religion to be humble, fearful, cautelous and watchful: never could the

world be told more loudly whither the spiritual pride of ungrounded novices in religion tendeth; and whither professors of strictness in religion may be carried in the stress of sects and factions." Baxter, the writer of these words, is a favourable type of Puritan divine. Yet how far lies tolerance from his contemplation, how narrow his regard for his own opinions. To Baxter, a Quaker is as fearful and dangerous a heretic as a Roman Catholic. He refuses to allow to either a spark of righteousness: he will not even permit his reason to examine their doctrines, preferring to hug his own rigid dogmatism to his naked mind. Though he claims to be guided of reason, yet in fact he is as compact of prejudice as his prophet Calvin.

Baxter's indictment of the Quakers is as complete as Laud's of the Presbyterians. It is the criticism of the formalist. The main position of George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, is his radical opposition to "an artificially built religion, *i.e.* a religion of dogma." (7) In his own account of his life, there are given the various steps of his progress. "One morning, as I was sitting at my fire, a great cloud came over me, and a temptation beset me; but I sate still. And it was said, All things come by nature." A little later, he tells: "Now was I come up in the spirit through the flaming sword, into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness and innocency and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus, to the state of Adam, which he was in before he fell. The creation was opened to me; and it was showed me how all things had their names given them according to their nature and virtue. I was at a stand in my mind whether I should practise physic

for the good of mankind, seeing the nature and virtues of the creatures were so opened to me by the Lord. But I was immediately taken up in the spirit, to see into another or more steadfast state than Adam's in innocency, even into a state in Christ Jesus that should never fall. And the Lord showed me such that were faithful to Him, in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell; in which the admirable works of the creation, and the virtues thereof, may be known through the openings of that divine Word of wisdom and power by which they were made. Great things did the Lord lead me into, and wonderful depths were opened unto me beyond what can by words be declared; but as people come into subjection to the Spirit of God, and grow up in the image and power of the Almighty, they may receive the word of wisdom, that opens all things, and come to know the hidden unity in the Eternal Being." (8)

For such wild uninstructed intelligences, there was no sympathy in ministers even of the comparative enlightenment of Baxter. The Quakers, he admits, were given to a life of purity; but otherwise they were no better in his eyes than the Ranters, a sect notorious for their reviling of ministers and strange profanity. The Quakers, he said had merely been " turned from horrid Prophaneness and Blasphemy, to a life of extreme austerity." Otherwise, they are dangerous fanatics. Yet in the end, of all the Puritan bodies, the Quakers alone achieve some possible harmony between the spiritual and the industrial life.

It is refreshing to turn from the Calvinistic Baxter to the broad-mindedness of Thomas Fuller. Fuller had thrown in his lot originally with the Parliamentary side,

but he regarded the hostile parties with too shrewd an eye to be popular. "Think not," he had preached in 1644, when negotiations for peace were in the air; "think not that the King's army is like Sodom, not ten righteous men in it, and the other army like Sion, consisting all of saints." His theme was misliked, and Fuller took refuge at Oxford. But here, too, his robust common sense was as little to the taste of the Royalists as it had been to the Parliamentarians; and Fuller set out once more on his wanderings, which after sixteen years led him back to his chapel in the Savoy. But Fuller was more the cultivated historian and theologian than the doctrinal enthusiast; and being a staunch Anglican, his toleration would meet with little respect. The Puritan minister who achieved popularity was of the "proper Presbyterian breed," intolerant to the point of Calvinissimism, armed with his theories of Predestination, Election, Justification by Faith, and all the fires of Damnation, much occupied with the villainy of his opponents, violent in discourse, intemperate in debate, more sensitive to heresy than the purest Inquisitor of the Holy Office, and less merciful in his allowance for the weakness of humanity, of the type of Thomas Edwards, one of the "new presbyters," the author of *Gangraena, or a Discovery of many Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies and pernicious Practices*, of which a brother divine remarked: "I marvel how Mr Edwards having (it seems) an authorized power to make errors and heresies at what rate and of what materials he pleaseth, and hopes to live upon the trade, could stay his pen at so small a number as 180, and did not advance to that angelical quotient in the Apocalypse, which is ten thousand times ten thousand." To such men, their richest pleasure seems to lie in the exposition of the terrors of Hell, the

greatness of the torments of the damned, Man's everlasting guilt and God's wrath and jealousy. To such, the whisper of toleration was as noxious as a whiff of phosgene gas to a soldier. And against their strength it was vain for such as Roger Williams to write his pamphlets for freedom of religious thought, for such as Cudworth to preach the gospel of reason. Samuel Butler was not far wrong in his estimate of the Puritan ministry when he wrote:

> " To rule is to be sanctified:
> To domineer and to control
> Both o'er the body and the soul
> Is the most perfect discipline
> Of Church-rule and by right divine."

With such men at his back, Cromwell might well cry: " Where shall we have men of universal spirit? Every man desires to have liberty, but none will give it." (9)

(ii)

While the religious sectarians were developing their various ideas of spiritual enlargement, an almost equal number of sects were striving for political and social freedom. The revolution begun by the Parliament had been a revolt of the middle classes. Their quarrel was entirely with the King, the Bishops and the Council. They had no thought for the stigmatized rabble. Their main object in its lowest terms had been the security and sanctification of their own property. But at the same time, their individualism had infected a number of other men, who by now were questioning even the right of Parliament on its restricted franchise to rule the nation. John Lilburne, " Freeborn John " as he liked to call himself,

had been a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Parliamentary army. A bold restless man with quick wits and a tongue notable for raillery, his first political convictions had led him to consider the Commons as the representatives of the nation: but a quarrel with these representatives in 1645 and his consequent imprisonment in Newgate gave him occasion to reconsider his beliefs. He emerged from prison having arrived at the conclusion that the only just government was one elected by the people, a considerably larger body than the electorate. The idea of the sovereignty of the people was born. For the next eight years, until banishment freed the government from the sorest thorn in their side, Lilburne quarrelled and pamphleteered in his cause with recklessness and vigour, discarding all restraint, even the laws of natural history (as when he accused Cromwell of being "led by the nose by two unworthy covetous earthworms, Vane and St John"). In his *Agreement of the People*, he demanded three main things, manhood suffrage and biennial Parliaments, freedom of religious practice, and equality for all men in the eyes of the law. These proposals were bitterly criticized in the House, to whose members they appeared to strike at the very roots of authority. The doctrines were thought to imply the extrusion of the rights of private property and to be aimed at bringing the country into a state of anarchy. Ireton, "the cunningest of Machiavelians," as Lilburne called him, the brain behind Cromwell, attacked the Levellers—the title fastened to Lilburne's adherents—claiming that rights in the state implied no more than the right to breathe the air: property alone was the just qualification for franchise. But Lilburne's theories infected the army. Mutinies broke out in several regiments, and were only put down by

extraordinary activity on the part of Cromwell and Fairfax. The rebellious soldiers were suppressed, but nothing could stop Lilburne's zeal. He poured out his tracts, *England's New Chains*, *The Second Part of England's New Chains*, *The Legal Fundamental Liberties of the People of England*, *An Impeachment of High Treason against Oliver Cromwell and his Son-in-law Ireton*, *An Outcry of the Young Men and Apprentices of London*, a new *Agreement of the People*, all couched in the most frothing abusive terms but all preaching one doctrine, the vindication of the personal liberty of the citizen, and his right to be represented by his own chosen government. His views brought him more and more friends. His frequent commitments to gaol for some unusually outrageous production found him sympathizers, even among the rich burgesses of London, who, as much as Lilburne, disliked the disciplinary rule of an autocratic, military, oligarchy. Well might Cromwell bang his fist on the table and cry: "I tell you, you have no other way to deal with these men but to break them, or they will break you; yea, and bring all the guilt of blood and treasure shed and spent in the kingdom upon your heads and shoulders, and frustrate and make void all that work that with so many years industry, toil and pains you have done, and so render you to all rational men in the world as the most contemptible generation of silly low-spirited men in the earth to be broken and routed by such a despicable, contemptible generation of men as they are, and, therefore, I tell you, sir, again, you are necessitated to break them." (10)

Lilburne could be confined, his followers shot or imprisoned: but his spirit it was impossible to break. Tried for his life in October, 1649, on a charge of treason,

he conducted his own defence with consummate ingenuity. He drew his cause out of the meshes of legal intricacy, and fought it on the merits of his doctrine. "Even our Parliaments, the very marrow and soul of all the native rights of the people, put down, and the name and power thereof transmitted to a picked party of your forcible selecting, and such as your officers—our lords and riders—have often styled no better than a mock Parliament, a seeming authority, or the like, pretending a continuance thereof, but till a new and equal representative, by mutual agreement of the free people of England, could be elected, although now for their subserviency to their exaltation and kingship, they prorogue and perpetuate the same, in the name and under colour of thereof introducing a Privy Council, or, as they call it, a Council of State, of superintendency and suppression to all future Parliaments for ever, erecting a martial government by blood and violence impulsed upon us." (11) He was found not guilty by a jury of tradesmen, among scenes of unparalleled enthusiasm. It was the high-water mark of Lilburne's career. In 1651, Parliament took advantage of one of his vituperative attacks on a member of their own body to have him tried for libel, and banished. He returned without permission in 1653, and was again arrested. Under Cromwell's guidance, Parliament took the short but unwise course of passing an Act declaring him guilty of felony, in flagrant disregard of every moral and constitutional right of the subject. He was tried on 20th August; and the jury returned the verdict, "Not guilty of any crime worthy of death." Finally, he was once more banished, and remained in exile until just before his death, which occurred a year prior to that of the man he had so much hated and contemned, Cromwell.

Divested of their rhetoric, Lilburne's theories were prophetic. They found favour with a great number in all classes, especially with the merchants and industrialists. For he preached for all men a release from restriction. But Cromwell, the practical man, and his legal-minded son-in-law, Ireton, were his diligent enemies. Ireton is the true representative of the ever tardy executive, basing his beliefs on the theories that have the sanction of law and custom. Industrious, able, impartial to iciness, rootedly conservative, he would have come to terms with the King himself, had it been possible, in his desire for order. His reply to Lilburne and his Levellers might be the answer of any *fonctionnaire* at any time, when faced by an unusual proposal. "We ought to keep to the constitution we have because it is the most fundamental, and because there is so much reason in it that I dare undertake there are many more evils that will follow in case you do alter than in the standing of it." Peace and order are Ireton's gods, and no idea which might threaten these could pierce his prejudice. Men, he was convinced, were by nature evil and not to be trusted. Perhaps he even distrusted his father-in-law, seeing in him, as many others did, a creature of unreined ambition.

The dislike of Cromwell and Ireton for the teachings of Lilburne were as nothing to the rooted abhorrence they held for the theories expounded by Gerard Winstanley, the begetter of the "True Levellers," better known as "the Diggers." Cromwell had already made it clear to the Dorset Clubmen that no third party, especially not one composed of the poorest party in the state, would be tolerated in a war which was being waged for the rights of property. The followers of Winstanley were even more immoderate than the Clubmen; for not even

restrained to the desire to protect what they had, they preached the strange communistic doctrine that the earth had always been "a common treasury for beasts and men," and that it had been filched and enclosed by those who had set themselves up as rulers. Now that the King was dead, they said, and royalty no more, the crown lands reverted by natural law to the rightful owners, the people. In earnest of their contention, they appeared at St George's Hill near Oatlands and commenced digging on the crown waste lands. "One Everard, once of the Army, who terms himself a prophet, is the chief of them. . . . They invited all to come and help them; and promised them meat, drink and clothes. They threaten to pull down park pales, and to lay all open; and threaten their neighbours that they will shortly make them all come up to the hills and work." When brought before the Council, Everard and Winstanley professed themselves without malice to their neighbours. All they held was "that all the Liberties of the People were lost by the coming in of William the Conqueror . . . but now the time of deliverance was at hand; and God would bring his people out of this slavery, and restore them to their freedom in enjoying the fruits and benefits of the earth . . . the time will suddenly be when all men shall come in and give up their lands and estates and submit to the Community of Goods." (12) Everard's and Winstanley's ideas, which were rooted in a kind of Quakerism, were too many centuries in advance of their times. The Diggers did not draw a following, nor did they flourish, in spite of a remarkable song, composed in the rhythm of that ancient soldiers' ballad, "Johnny Hall." They continued miserably for some years. They were set upon by magistrates, soldiers, and even the peasantry, who

broke down their fences and stupidly stamped down their plots of vegetables. Gradually they dissolved, but not before Winstanley had produced one remarkable document, the profession of his creed, *The Law of Freedom*, dedicated to Cromwell, in which one catches as strong as ever, the echo of " the sin of covetousness is the root of all evil." The bottom of his argument is the assertion that the duty of society is to see that man does not starve. He points to the vast acreage of waste land, untilled and unpeopled, and then to the starving peasantry. The reason of the fault is greed. Take away the possibility of individual greed and the evil will disappear with it. The only remedy is a society founded on communal effort. There must be no buying, no selling, no barter. There shall be a common stock into which every man shall put the fruits of his toil, and from which he shall draw so much as he needs for his existence. Work will be required of all. If a member of the community is lazy, he is to be punished. Education should be in the hands of the clergy, who are also responsible for the dissemination of news. It is, in short, the elaboration of what Winstanley had already declared in an earlier tractate, the doctrine of Christ's saying: " The poor shall inherit the earth." " You jeer," said Winstanley, " at the name Leveller. I tell you Jesus Christ is the head Leveller."

The effect of the pamphlet on Cromwell we do not know; but we can guess it had little interest for that practical minded saint, more especially as he was, at the moment of publication, much occupied with the arrangements for the banishment of that more systematic enthusiast, Lilburne.

The majority of the sects perished before or with the

Restoration, some peacefully, others, like the Fifth Monarchy Men, in blood. The Quakers survived, perhaps because, of all the associations, their doctrines alone were spiritually high and apart from the material world and its teachings. But the theories of many have borne fruit. John Lilburne's democracy is to-day universal in the English-speaking countries; and there are some resolute idealists who believe that Winstanley's perfect State is not wholly impracticable. Only the dreams of the humanists seem still as far distant from fulfilment.

(iii)

None, not one, of the political visionaries had a chance of success in the world in which he lived: for they met in opposition the whole weight of the conservative middle classes, reinforced by the discipline of Puritanism. In the clash of ideas, there is no prospect of agreement; victory falls to the strongest arm.

If one has no love for Puritanism and all that it implies, one cannot withhold admiration from the man who nearly succeeded in making order out of the chaos which followed the Civil War. Cromwell's postures are so clearly natural, whether he is breaking windows in Peterboro, playing bowls on St John's lawn, shouting "let God arise, let His enemies be scattered," as the dawn rises on the rout at Dunbar, or smoking his pipe and listening to music among his friends. Very honest, when practical things are to be done, the plain man inspired by events. One is struck by the way the man of action sloughs his fanatic skin under the influence of war. There is a longer passage than that of years between the wild country squire, summoning ministers from the pulpit,

and the harassed leader crying for men "of universal spirit." Eight years of active service mellowed the soldier and exorcized the zealot. A man in the grip of a strong current will hardly risk experimenting a new method of swimming. Cromwell was as little likely to pay attention to the apostles of new theories standing on the bank, whether they might be his own dressy Major-General Harrison, enraptured prophet of the millennium, or George Fox sublimely reminding him that a heavenly cross alone was desirable.

Conservative by tradition, believing in the natural order of classes, the chaos around him only hardened his instinctive distrust of new ideas. He was slow to make up his mind, but when he had, he went through with it unhesitatingly. He never took a step without seeing the direction of the one which must follow: but when he did move, he moved as a man of purpose—quickly. "I am often judged," he said, "for one that goes too fast. Give me leave to say. That which you have by force, I look upon it as nothing." (13) That rapid arrival at his destination clothed him with the appearance of personal ambition, which all his enemies and so many of his friends suspected. They were wrong. The only ambition of which Cromwell was possessed, was very different from what they imagined. It was the leadership of that formidable league of Protestant powers he had envisaged, which was to sweep down and end once and for all the spiritual and temporal power of the Vicar of Rome.

Why, one asks, was his hatred of Rome so unremitting, so adamant? When he was prepared to plead for freedom of worship for all the other divisions of Christianity, Presbyterians, Quakers, even Antinomians, to interview wandering religious maniacs, to accept with courtesy the

rebukes of George Fox, why was he so rigid in his hatred of this one branch, as resolute as the most bull-voiced, vituperant pulpiteer? His attitude is one of the milestones on the road of Puritanism. It is marked in the speech which he made to the House of Commons in September, 1656. "The plain truth of it is—make any peace with any State that is Papist and subject to the determination of Rome and the Pope himself—you are bound, and they are loose. It is the pleasure of the Pope at any time to tell you that though the man is murdered, yet his murderer has got into the sanctuary. And equally true is it, and hath been found by common and constant experience, That Peace is but to be kept so long as the Pope saith Amen to it." (14) It is no longer the voice of fearful Protestantism, in terror of the coming of the Inquisition, the fires at Smithfield and the rack. It is not the voice of the religious purist, inveighing against idolatry and disguised paganism. It is the deepening bass of the middle sort of men, the tradesmen and the bourgeoisie, speaking for all he holds sacred, the business man's revulsion from the knave who will not stay by his bond, but will break his bargain and get absolution from his Pope. With such there can be no dealing, either in politics or by way of trade.

It was not with Charles, the tyrant, or with Charles, the Arminian, that Cromwell had his quarrel. It was with the man whose word he could not believe. Breach of troth was the reasoning on which he based his appeal to the Scots to support him, when he was rallying the judges to condemn the King. That, and that only, was the crime punishable by death.

That, too, is why Catholic Ireland is to Cromwell the most dangerous of enemies. "I had rather be overrun

by a cavalierish interest than a Scotch interest; I had rather be overrun by a Scotch interest than an Irish interest . . . all the world knows their barbarism . . . in a manner as bad as Papists." (15) This is the thought which stains a deeper red the already bloody massacres at Drogheda and Wexford. In the labyrinth of his conscience, Cromwell knew he had let his personal antipathies sway him from mercy, and that he had done evil. He would have liked to shift his responsibility. In his justification of his action (one feels it is an effort to soothe his soul, crapulous with killing) he must even inculpate his God. " Indeed, it hath not without cause been deeply set upon our hearts that we, intending better to the place (Wexford) than so great a ruin, hoping the town might be of more use to you and your army, yet God would not have it so; but by an unexpected providence in His righteous justice brought a just judgment upon them, causing them to become a prey to the soldiers who in their piracies have made preys of so many families, and now with their blood to answer the cruelties which they exercised upon the lives of divers poor Protestants." (16) One shudders to imagine into what red barbarism Europe would have been plunged had the Protestant league become more than a dream in the Protector's head.

There is evidence that Puritanism was prepared to slide from its precisian pinnacle and to place the Roman Catholics on an equality with the other sects, Antinomians and such, if the stumbling-block of supremacy could be got over. There were offers made to Roman Catholics to tolerate their religion in return for a denial of the Pope's authority. The offer was refused. Nevertheless, the fine flower of religious purism was withering. By

the end of 1656, Catholic priests were saying the Mass in London: and the authorities winked the other eye, contenting themselves with the commercial satisfaction of levying upon them the fines for recusancy. Yet the Roman Catholics had to wait another 170 years before being permitted to become fully qualified citizens.

On the other hand, as early as 1652 there was a reaction in favour of the legalized readmission of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, many of whom, with the connivance of the Council, had already established themselves in London, on the grounds that " they will give 60,000 or 80,000 pounds " for the foundation of a synagogue and draw all the Portuguese merchants from Amsterdam; in other words, bring over the world's most flourishing money market to England. It does not require cynicism to draw the obvious moral.

In truth, opinion was changing. The last of the religious conflicts, the Thirty Years War, had recently exhausted itself, after an orgy of blood, rapine and blasphemy, in the Treaty of Westphalia. The mind of Protestant England was turning from the mystic battle of creeds to a warfare concerned with simpler and more tangible issues. The next war, and the next, and those of the heirs to the future, would be fought for more material interests. The ruins of Wexford and Drogheda are the fingerposts down the new road.

Cromwell displays the Puritan character in all its curious variety. He possessed all the virtues of the older type, virtues which he put into action when he cleaned the Alsatia of London, and defended the Vaudois. Yet at the same time, in his colonial policy, he was with the new men, looking forward to an empire founded on the industry of a thriving and ambitious nation.

CHAPTER TEN

The victory of the practical qualities of Puritanism made the restoration of the monarchy inevitable. As Professor Gardiner has said in a most illuminating paragraph: "The framers of the [Navigation] Act, convinced republicans as they were, had changed the course of the ship of State, and were, all unwittingly, heading towards a restoration. If the leaders of the Commonwealth were but to be as the leaders of other nations, to seek after material wealth and material power, what end was to be served by keeping them in authority? The old monarchical system would serve the purpose just as well. The empire of custom on which its claims were based, would be more in harmony with the demands of a nation eager to become rich than a government which professed to hold its title from the Lord of Hosts, and justified its claim by giving free scope to religious enthusiasm and projects of social reform." (1)

Long before Oliver died, there were auguries of a counter-protectorate movement. Men found that they had merely exchanged the rule of a royal and customary executive for the less bridled rule of the executive of the Protector, whom they had largely freed from the one curb they had had on royalty, finance. There had been pamphlets, guessed to be by hands powerful in the City of London, against Oliver's combination of legislative and executive power. His high-handedness had become

a complete replica of that of Charles I. There had even been a duplicate of the Hampden case with an exactly similar verdict. Further, Cromwell had been able to enforce the decisions of the Committees of his Council, new parallels of the Star Chamber: refusal or hesitation to comply with a levy had merely brought a billeting party of soldiery to the reluctant taxpayer's door. It was usually sufficient. Last, the Presbyterians, driven into opposition, had come to the conclusion that, if they could not achieve republicanism, a monarchy was preferable to the half-caste government now in power, and they had become converted to the idea of a restoration.

The military machine of the Protectorate continued to work for some time after Cromwell's death. But its action was violent. Since there was no hand strong enough to control it, it flew to pieces. One part of it under Monk marched into England and recalled the remnants of the old Long Parliament. In two months Charles II had signed the Declaration of Breda and was on his way home.

"This day his Majesty, King Charles the Second, came to London, after a sad long exile and calamitous suffering both of King and Church, being seventeen years. This was also his birthday and with a triumph of above 20,000 horse and foot, brandishing their swords and shouting with inexpressible joy: the ways strewed with flowers, the bells ringing, the streets hung with tapestry, fountains running with wine; the Mayor, Aldermen and all the Companies, in their liveries, chains of gold, and banners, Lords and Nobles, clad in cloth of silver, gold and velvet; the windows and balconies all set with ladies; trumpets, music and myriads of people flocking, even so far as from Rochester, so as they were seven hours in passing the city, even from two in the afternoon till nine at night.

"I stood in the street and beheld it and blessed God. . . . It was the Lord's doing, for never such a restoration was mentioned in any history, ancient or modern since the return of the Jews from their Babylonish captivity; nor so joyful a day or so bright ever seen in this nation, this happening when to expect or effect it was past all human policy." (2)

The burst of joy which followed the Restoration was only a momentary spasm, which quickly passed. At first it seemed like a complete revulsion from Puritanism. "A spirit of extravagant joy spread over the nation, that brought on with it the throwing off of the very profession of virtue and piety: All ended in entertainments and drunkenness, which over-ran three kingdoms to such a degree, that it very much corrupted all their morals. Under the colour of drinking the King's health, there were great disorders and much riot everywhere. And the pretenders of religion both in those of the hypocritical sort, and of the more honest but no less pernicious enthusiasts, gave great advantages, as well as they furnished much matter, to the profane mockers of true piety. Those who had been concerned in the former transactions thought, they could not render themselves free from the censures and jealousies that these brought on them, by any method that was more sure and more easy, than by going into the stream, and laughing at all religion, telling or making stories to expose both themselves and their party as impious and ridiculous." (3)

Theatres were reopened. Fairs once more drew crowds. At St Margaret's Fair in Southwark, John Evelyn watched monkeys and apes dance and do other feats of activity on a high rope; "they were gallantly clad *à la mode*:" also an Italian wench dancing and a

weight-lifter. Pepys recorded the resurrection of some old customs. But the life had gone out of it: it was a pastiche of pre-war days.

The new licence was only the froth on the top of the river. Puritanism had eaten deeper into the skin of the nation than people knew. The open licentiousness of the court advertised the revolt: but it was little but advertisement. The cardinal virtues of Puritanism still dwelt in the middle classes: industry and thrift, the social benisons of their fathers, still flourished, if the religious root from which they had been cuttings was gradually desiccating. The bourgeoisie had tasted the blood of commercial success; and on it they had fastened, bringing to this end all the shifts and enthusiasms which their forerunners had employed with less material minds.

Though it was a restoration it was a restoration on terms. The men who accepted Charles had seen to that. The same phenomenon occurred which had been seen when Mary attempted to reintroduce the Church of Rome. Then the reformers were perfectly prepared to have the Pope back, provided he left them in possession of the estates which had once been his. Now, the Long Parliament was quite enthusiastic for Charles so long as he did not attempt to restore properties to those who had suffered from the Protectorate's levies and decimations. The Act of Oblivion and Indemnity confirmed those who had profited by the Civil War in their possessions and gave no redress to those whom loyalty to the defeated cause had ruined. The victims " made a jest of the title and said the King had passed an act of oblivion for his friends, and of indemnity for his enemies."

The religious difficulty was less easy of settlement. The Church of England returned to establishment on

the full flood of the Restoration. But since the Presbyterians had been largely instrumental in the return of the King, some compensation must be made to them. The "most religious" King was in favour of toleration for all, Protestants and Catholics alike: but this was still beyond the comprehension of those who had turned out one king and brought back another. Clarendon suggested a widening of the terms of the establishment, whereby the Presbyterians could be accommodated, and the revision of the Book of Common Prayer to suit both parties. Since the quarrel was largely over the matter of discipline, a limitation of the disciplinary power of the bishops to mere chairmanship of diocesan synods appeared likely to meet the case. Offers of bishoprics under the suggested new system were made to several notable Puritan divines, among them to Baxter, but all offers were rejected. The result was a hardening of the terms. The Corporation Act of 1661 practically confined all municipal offices and seats in Parliament to Anglicans. The Act of Uniformity of 1662, which imposed the use of the Book of Common Prayer, ordination by bishop, and the episcopal licence for all tutors and schoolmasters, exiled some 2000 Puritan clergymen from the Church of England. The Conventicle Act of 1664 stopped all meetings of nonconformists, while the Five Mile Act of 1665 drove open dissent from the cities into the country.

Yet the effect of this series of hammer blows was not what the strikers had expected. Instead of driving the Puritan clergy to conformity, it stiffened the dissenters all the more strongly in their opposition. They were supported, too, by the majority of the towns, led by London. Their cause became identified with the anti-royal and no-popery cause. It was very noticeable that the boroughs,

the homes of the commercial corporations, were returning to Parliament members not of the Anglican persuasion. " The great talk of the town is the strange election that the City of London made yesterday for Parliament men; viz. Fowke, Love, James and [Thompson], men that are so far from being episcopal that they are thought to be Anabaptists, and chosen with a great deal of zeal, in spite of the other party that thought themselves very strong, calling out in the Hall, ' No Bishops! No Lord Bishops! ' It do make people fear it may come to worse, by being an example to the country to do the same." (4)

The Church of England looked on angrily at these demonstrations but it was powerless to stem the tide. For though it was indeed a restored church with all its ancient wealth and dignities, it nevertheless had lost its importance. In part that was due to its own weakness. The days of the great divines were past. Stillingfleet, Tillotson and a few others stand like mountains in a dreary plain: but the main body was feeble. " There broke in upon the Church," says Bishop Burnet, " a great deal of luxury and high living on the pretence of hospitality, while others made purchases and left great estates. . . . And with this overset of wealth and pomp, that came on men in the decline of their parts and age, they, who were now growing into old age, became lazy and negligent in all the true concerns of the Church. They left preaching and writing to others, while they gave themselves up to ease and sloth." (5) But there was another cause besides the decline in the character of the churchmen, one that was probably of deeper effect; the terms of the Church's restoration. For it was no longer a third and powerful party in the State with its seats in the Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission. Shorn

of its judicial powers, it leaned its Erastian fabric on the support of Parliament, a dependent, rendering an unwilling obedience to the masters from whom its authority was derived. Consequently it became the ally of the royal party and the Tories, in opposition to the dissenters allied with the Whigs and the commercial classes. Among the last, the Church of England had few friends. "I and Lieutenant Lambert to Westminster Abbey," writes Pepys in 1660, "where we saw Dr Frewen translated to the Archbishopric of York. Here I saw the Bishops of Winchester, Bangor, Rochester, Bath and Wells, and Salisbury. . . . But Lord! at their going out, how people did most of them look upon them as strange creatures, and few with any kind of love or respect." (6) Again he notes: "Indeed the Bishops are so high that few do love them." (7) It is not surprising that the ethical teachings of the church, in its dependent position and in such an atmosphere, lost their power, nay, were actively resented. Pepys is very hot against preachers who do not stick to purely doctrinal themes but let their spirit lead them into topics of the mundane world. "A most tedious, unreasonable, impertinent sermon by an Irish Doctor. His text was 'O scatter them, O Lord, that delight in war.' Sir Wm. Batten and I very much angry with the parson." (8) "The Bishop of Chichester preached before the King and made a great flattering sermon, which I did not like that Clergy should meddle with matters of State." (9)

Nor were the Puritan clergy any happier in their work. As dependent upon the goodwill of their congregation as the Church of England clergy upon the State, they too found it was safer to deal only with religious topics than to enter upon the field of moral controversy. An in-

judicious criticism of the practices of their commercial auditory spelled the removal of the indiscreet critic from his conventicle. "I see," the inevitable diarist aptly comments, "that religion, be what it will, is but a humour, and so the esteem of it passeth as other things do." (10)

In truth, in spite of the fierce quarrels, the plots, the executions, which preceded the final exile of the Stuarts, the interest in religion was falling away. Its wane was due, not to the sins of the day, but to the now ingrained virtues of Puritanism. While the successful man of business was ill disposed to listen to the chidings of a priesthood in matters so clearly outside its province as the ethics of commerce—they looked for no Laud to sit in judgment on their profits—his politicians were following the same line of thought. Parliament was no longer composed of men who could wrestle with doctrinal points with the fervour of the "poor despised saints" of 1640. The House of Commons was being watered down by men who were deeply embroiled in arguments of a more concrete nature.

The Civil War had completed that reversal of the social structure which had begun in the dawn of the century. When James I came to the throne, industry was still the province of the guilds, a group of independent societies in which each member was at least theoretically the equal of his fellow in the mystery, whatever the respective wealth of each might be. The sudden expansion of commerce had begun to break down the system. The growth of individualism had added its weight. The ruinous years of war had completed the swing over. By the Restoration, industry was no longer a society based on craftsmanship, but on wealth. A new order had appeared, not only invading the territory of the gentry,

but absorbing many of its members into its ranks. The practice of politics had passed into the hands of a new class. The members who took their seats in 1640, had been drawn for the most part from the landed gentry. Whatever their motives, their personal integrity had been above suspicion. But under the Protectorate, it had been discovered that politics might be a not wholly unremunerative occupation. There had been whispers of a certain venality attaching to the Parliament of Saints. With the fall of Clarendon in 1667, another atmosphere began to permeate Westminster. A new type of member was being attracted, men little interested in religion, but much in commerce and colonial expansion. (It must be remembered that the colonies were at this time looked on merely as so many cows to be milked for the benefit of the mother country.) The cry of "No Bishops! No Lord Bishops!" had found its echo in the hearts of the electorate, resolute against any ecclesiastical interference in politics. The wars of religion were definitely over; the cycle of trade wars begun. Cromwell, a product of both the old and the new Puritanism, had shown the way with the Navigation Act and the Dutch wars. In 1663, the members of the Royal African Company, finding the Dutch had the advantage of them in the Guinea Coast trade, attempted to establish a claim to the territory, but finding that they had no legal rights, "they drew the discussion to the easiness, by the assistance of two or three of the King's ships, to take away all that the Dutch possessed in and about Guinea, there never having been a ship of war in those parts; so that the work might be presently done, and such an alliance made with the natives, who did not love the Dutch, that the English might be unquestionably possessed of the whole trade of

that country." (11) Their optimistic arguments appealed to the times. Clarendon, faced with what he called a barefaced war, yielded to the clamour raised by interested patriots: and when the war failed, suffered the reward of bearing the blame of the men who had driven him to it.

In a few years, Parliament, which in the first years of the Restoration had been largely aristocratic in colour, was swamped by the influx of new members whose ideals were more selfish. (12) The idea of a business government is less novel than some twentieth century publicists imagine: there was that of Lord Danby, a descendant of London commercial classes, the most effective exponent in his day of the arts of corruption, who died with a vast fortune and a dukedom, to leave to his country the legacy of the complicated machinery of graft, jobbery and preferment, so skilfully handled by eighteenth-century politicians. The day of Mr By-ends had come, the man who is " for religion in what, and so far as the times and my safety will bear it. They are for religion in rags and contempt; but I am for him when he walks in his golden slippers, in the sunshine and with applause." The theories of Hobbes and the principles of Descartes, which so horrified the older generation, are but the formulations of the unexpressed misty ideas of the new men.

Pepys had shot nearer to the mark than he was probably aware. The humour for religion was dying fast. The world was falling into the hands of those " mechanical Christians," described by a great Puritan divine, " who, not finding religion acting like a living form within them, satisfy themselves only to make an art of it, and rather inform and actuate it than to be informed by it; and setting it such bounds and limits as may not exceed the short and scant measures of their own home-born prin-

ciples, then they endeavour to fit the notions of their own minds as to many examples to it: and, it being a circle of their own making, they can either ampliate it or contract it, according as they can force their own minds and dispositions to agree and suit with it." (13) The moral obligations of man towards society, the cardinal principle of the Christian religion, were perishing in a utilitarian age.

The new mercantile philosophy gave a twist to the centuries-old teachings against usury, extortion, conscienceless transactions, and all the other tricks of "the pest and vermin of the commonwealth." In the whirr of busy looms, in the roar of the iron-foundry, the words of the saints, prophets and teachers were overborne and swept away. To the Puritan ironmasters of Staffordshire, to the dissenters refuged in the group of villages which were to coalesce as Birmingham, to the cotton spinners in the Independent towns of Lancashire, to the non-conforming wool-merchants of Yorkshire, and to the banking families of Vyner, Backwell and Player, who had lent money to Cromwell, to the ingenious Downing, once scout-master-general to the Parliamentary forces and now promoter of war with the Dutch, to the devious Yarranton, once a Roundhead captain and now the busiest of projectors, to all the hard-headed sectarian men of business in the City of London, "which rears its head so high in the trading world . . . that it is preferable to what any other capital city is to any other kingdom or state upon earth," the doctrines in which their fathers had believed were become idle superstition. Such maunderings could only lead to restraint upon trade and to the ruin of the country. Busy men had no time to give ear to an out-moded ideal. Slighted and despised by such paladins, the Church of England drew away; its voice faltered. The voices of

the nonconformist divines, bound to the aggressive classes which had put them in their ministries, failed. Only here and there did a few still preach the old traditional ethic against man's cupidity. Baxter still defended the older way. Bunyan in *The Life and Death of Mr Badman* assured his Mr Attentive that his protagonist, after a lifetime of clipping and grinding the poor, coupled with several unblushing bankruptcies, was inevitably burning in Hell. But few paid attention to their warnings. The doctrine of self-regarding and self-perfecting conduct inherited from stricter forbears was too strong for the mediæval doctrine of society-regarding conduct. Mr Badman was a more cunning casuist than his creator. At no distant date an eminent dissenter would assure his readers of the delights of bankruptcy, and advise against the making of positive promises, since it is mortifying to a tradesman to have to break his word. "Custom," he says, "has driven us beyond the limits of our morals in many things which trade makes necessary, and which we can now very rarely avoid; so that if we must pretend to go back to the literal sense of the command, if our yea must be yea, and our nay, nay, why, then, it is impossible for tradesmen to be Christians, and we must unhinge all business, act upon new principles in trade, and so in many things, we must leave off living; for as conversation is called life, we must leave off converse. All the ordinary communication of life is now full of lying; and what with table-lies, salutation-lies, and trading-lies, there is no such thing as every man speaking truth with his neighbour." [1] (14)

[1] One honourable exception among the trading sects to the general economic licentiousness of the century following the Civil War is the Society of Friends. Fox tells us of the outcry of the mercantile interests

While the attitude towards the ethics of trading was undergoing this conversion, the Puritan attitude of non-responsibility for the state of the poorer classes, of which the first symptoms had appeared under the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, was crystallizing into a definite social philosophy. The purging of society which had taken place under the Protectorate had merely further degraded it, without effecting the reformation aimed at. Sir Matthew Hale, who became Chief Justice of Common Pleas in 1671, watched the gradual change with apprehension. "A due care for the relief of the poor," he wrote, "is an act of great piety towards God . . . an act of the greatest humanity among men . . . an act of great civil prudence and political wisdom: for poverty in itself is apt to emasculate the minds of men, or at least it makes men tumultuous and unquiet. . . . At this day it seems to me that the English nation is more deficient in their prudent provision for the poor than any other cultivated and Christian state; at least that have so many opportunities and advantages to supply them. In some other countries a beggar is a rare sight, those that are unable to maintain themselves by age or impotency are relieved. And those that are able to supply their wants by their labour are furnished with employments suitable to their condition. . . . But with us in England, for want of a due regulation of things, the more populous

against them, because of their fair trading, which their enemies said would ruin the rest of the country. Defoe (*Complete English Tradesman*, I, 145) speaks of them as holding to asking a fair price and sticking to it, though "time and the necessities of trade have brought them a good deal off of that severity." There was the Quaker ironmaster, Darby, who, having discovered a new method of smelting by coal, refused to take out a patent on the grounds that such an action would deprive the public of the benefit. (See Ashton, *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution*, p. 250.)

we are, the poorer we are, so that wherein the strength and wealth of a kingdom consists, renders us the weaker and poorer. . . . We have very severe laws against begging. . . . We have also very severe laws against theft, possibly more severe than most nations, yea, and than the offence in itself simply considered deserves; and there is little to be said in defence of the severity of the law herein . . . yet the jails are never the emptier. . . . The prevention of poverty, idleness, and a loose and disorderly education, even of poor children, would do more good to this kingdom than all the gibbets, and cauterizations, and whipping-posts, and jails in this kingdom, and would render these kinds of disciplines less necessary and less frequent." (15) Sir Matthew went on to point out that the only provision for the poor was that contained in the Elizabethan statute, and that the terms of that were being neglected. Not only was charity moribund, but the constructive measures laid down for putting the poor to work were not being carried out.

But the Chief Justice spoke to deaf ears. The complete rearrangement of the structure of English society during the seventeenth century had widened the gap which lies between those who have and those who have not. In the sixteenth century it had not been so gaping, and it had been at least partially bridged by the guild system. With the failure of that system to accommodate the swelling commercial plutocracy, the gap had sprung apart to a gulf. One can almost see the formation of the present form of English society stratifying beneath one's eyes as one peruses the economic literature of the second half of the seventeenth century and of the early eighteenth. Up to the Civil War, the poor had always been recognized as an insoluble but natural problem, and the whole line of

Tudor and early Stuart legislation had been directed to mitigating its misfortunes. But with the shift of society, the problem was presented in a different light. The poor, whom the mediæval had regarded as nearer akin to Christ than the rich, to the enlightened eye of Puritanism became blood brothers with Satan. Their woes, these industrious saints held, were directly due to the angry justice of the Almighty; and, if it was not exactly the duty, it was at least the right of the elect to take full advantage of their superior position. In this temper, the middle classes were firm in their refusal to allow their activities to be hampered by interference from above dictated by any foolish sympathy with the unfortunate. The Puritan belief in self-reliance became sharpened to a belief in self-interest, as being not only of public benefit, but the true morality.

In the new attitude of the commercial classes towards the poor lie the first causes of the war of classes which has been troubling the minds of Europe since 1848. There has always been jealousy between adjacent classes, whereas between those more widely set apart there has been, if not invariably respect and sympathy, at least a mutual toleration. The contempt of the aristocrat for the plutocrat is echoed in the hatred of the upper middle class, the functionary class, for the lower petty tradesman class, and of this lower for the proletariat, while a like enmity progresses in the same degrees upwards. The commercial classes saw in the labouring classes not objects of pity, but merely of contempt, unpossessing and undeserving. Charity towards such was reckless indulgence of their worst propensities. That feeding and housing them merely drove them to idleness, was the theme of countless social and economic writers of the day. "Men and

women are grown so idle and proud," complains one writer of 1673, "that they will not work but lie upon the parish." "Labouring people seldom have any other ambition than to live and save nothing," writes another, forty years later.

Unconsciously, the economist, the moralist and the employer of labour were beginning to look upon the lower classes as not only separated from themselves by a gulf, but as a species of a quite different order in nature. There is a general feeling that the poor are not human, but a commodity, like sheep and cattle, but which, unfortunately by nature recalcitrant and reluctant, cannot be yoked to its work. The lower orders exist for two purposes, to produce and to consume; and they are required in numbers in order to lower wages and so reduce the cost of production. To better their condition is waste of money and a spur to their natural idleness. The workhouse had become a definite menace, since it reduced the amount of labour available. In fine, in the words of one specialist, "our charity is become a nuisance."

The discipline of Puritanism had become all sufficing to itself. No longer regarding industry as an ascetic purge to sweat the dross of material life from a man's soul and render him fit for his presentation at the throne of the Almighty, the Puritan prized it now only for its mundane ends. He had torn down the old, intricate system of society, with its interdependent relationships and inevitable anomalies, and set up in its place his system of individual responsibility, a system which, by the very springs of its existence, must end in selfishness and self-interest. In the name of religion, the bourgeoisie had carried their revolution; and in the name of religion, had seized on the spoils. In doing so, they had dethroned

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for many years, perhaps for ever, the one moral authority which alone could cope with the cupidity of man, and alone war with the gospel of the cash ledger, the Church. "Oh Holy Reformation! how thou art fallen down from the upper bodies of the church to the skirts of the city."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

(i)

It is not to be denied that with its victory Puritanism brought to life in these islands many things of moral and material benefit to its inhabitants. It had fought the cause of liberty, and at least, so far as political freedom is concerned, it had laid a foundation which has supported an ever increasing fabric. It had fought, too, the cause of religious freedom. That its motives were impure, that it purposed rather to impose its own brand of religion upon the country is probably true: but having roused the hunger for religious liberty, it could not stay it. Religious liberty was bound sooner or later to be universal. It had rescued the country from the interference of an antiquated executive, and, by so doing, had given an impetus to the expansion of an empire which would become the envy of onlookers in the succeeding century.

Yet like the bad fairy's gifts, these benefits were two-edged. The vaunted liberty turned to licence. In spite of all his qualities, the Puritan fell into the very sin which he had commenced by despising. "The love of money is the root of all evil." In desiccation, the Puritan became the highest exponent of all the acquisitive instincts which his forefathers would have been the first to rebuke; and by the qualities of his energy, he exploited them to the fullest. It could not have been otherwise. It was the inevitable corollary of his beliefs.

Puritanism is a negative creed. By its denial of the fundamental will to goodness in man, by its insistence on his birth in sin, it robbed life of half its purpose. John Smith, the Platonist, warned his hearers against this conception of the nature of man. "Wherever it finds Beauty, Harmony, Goodness, Love, Ingenuousness, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice and the like, it [True Religion] is ready to cry: Here, and there, is God. . . . A good man finds every place he treads upon Holy Ground: to him the World is God's Temple." (1) Such an utterance was almost blasphemous to one brought up with the sense of ever present peril to his immortal soul. Feeling himself surrounded with the powers of evil, the Puritan distrusted deeper and deeper the allurements of the world. Like Baxter, he saw it as "a carcase that had neither life nor loveliness," and his light ambitions fell from him. He dedicated himself to mundane toil in order to keep his eyes and his thoughts from the attractions and distractions of the world. He disciplined himself to resist; he taught himself to abstain, and lauded continence, not because continence was good, but because incontinence was evil.

That perpetual sense of danger had a tonic effect. It braced the Puritan to his task. Against the diseases of life, he inoculated himself with the prophylactic of self-centred labour.

Prophylactics are as dangerous as any other drugs. Habit invariably breeds an appetite. Gradually the Puritan became the victim of his own asceticism, found in it an actual virtue. And, as success attended his efforts, the higher did he prize it, until he forgot the object for which he had first advocated its use. It is only thirty years after the close of the Protectorate that it is definitely said that "the main spur to trade . . . is the exorbitant

appetite of men, which they will take pains to gratify and so be disposed to work." The words are written in the spirit of purely scientific inquiry as of a natural phenomenon.

The virtues of one age are the vices of the next: but so conservative is man that even when the wine has faded and is soured to a disgustful vinegar, he will continue to drink it, having accustomed his palate to each successive shade of acidity. Only after three centuries is the world beginning to perceive that the characteristic virtues of Puritanism were healthy only so long as they remained fresh and pure.

When the liberal spirits of Europe, Montesquieu and Voltaire, examined England during the eighteenth century, they quite rightly put down the credit of its prosperity to the great watchword of liberty. They saw a country in which every man seemed to do what pleased him, and a country far richer than their own poor France, hampered by the restrictions imposed by a needy court and aristocracy. But Voltaire and Montesquieu only touched the fringe of the country. Their acquaintance was among the cultivated and the rich. They knew nothing of the common man or his life.

The eighteenth century, so belauded as the fine edge of civilization, where sentiment had declined to sensibility, and formalism took the place of genuine expression, is, in relation to its immediate predecessors, the most barbarous of epochs. That during its span were born the humanitarian movements which flowered in the nineteenth century affects in no way the general character of the English people during this era of expediency. The fact that the last sixty years saw the birth of strong religious movements, Wesleyanism, Methodism, and the Evan-

gelical sect within the Church of England, does not purge its society of the charge of utter materialism and lack of public morality. The régime of approved greed, which first shows itself in the seventeenth century, rules with redoubled energy in the eighteenth. Though, as with every generalization, exceptions may be cited—there is the wiry hatred of a Swift, the humanistic sympathy of a Chesterfield—yet these individual instances of men of charity are the reverse of the general rule: the eighteenth century is the most striking instance of the desecration of human relationships under the cloak of enlightenment and reason.

It is the age of invention and the quickening of industry, of the opening of the blast furnaces, of the device of the flying shuttle, of the discovery of stone and lead glaze, an age which sees the English domination of India, and English settlements in three continents, an age of wealth and activity. But, in contrast to this, it is the great age of speculative enterprise, more speculative than enterprising, the years of South Sea projects and bubble companies. It is an age which begins with the peak years of the slave trade, when the South Sea company undertook to deliver 5000 pieces—a pretty word—of suitable age and height annually to the American colonies (2) (it is perhaps invidious to reflect that only a century earlier an English agent in Africa was refusing slaves on the ground that his country did not deal in creatures that had our shapes) (3), and ends with the establishment of the opium trade, "a pernicious article," as Warren Hastings said, "which ought not to be permitted *except for the purposes of foreign commerce only*, and which the wisdom of the Government should carefully restrain from internal consumption." It is an age which sees the rise and

extension of child labour, the beginning of potter's rot, lead-poisoning and other industrial diseases, of the passage of the Playhouse Bill and the Gin Acts. It is an age of savage penal laws inflicted with a barbarity and indifference to suffering worthy of the twelfth century. It is in fine the age which sees the brutalizing of the rabble and the final cleavage between masters and workmen.

That a great deal of the brutalism of the age is due directly or indirectly to Puritanism is not the unjustified exaggeration it may seem at first glance. It would be perfectly true to say, that had the men who made the Civil War foreseen to what ends the liberty they had fought to achieve would be put, they would have flinched before laying so intolerable a burden upon their descendants. The early Puritans had stood for individual correctitude. They would not depart one hair's breadth from the teaching of their Church, or the whisper of their own conscience, in the matter of commercial dealing. But in their strength, the strength which they had gained by their own self-discipline, wrought of much pondering of the nature of God, they had failed to observe the lesson which the older churchmen they despised and threw down had understood so well. They failed to understand the frailty of the human soul under the stress of temptation. They had set up a theocracy in which none was judge save God Himself, and His word to the individual conscience was alone worthy of acceptance: but they did not appreciate the fact that the individual is, more frequently than not, deaf to that subtle communication. The early Church had recognized that man is weak and cannot stand unaided. By the rejection of the props offered by the Church, the fathers of Puritanism left their descendants a prey to temptations to which they themselves, in the

first flush of their spiritual pride and vigour, could not fall. They had destroyed the only restraining force upon man's instincts, the only humanizing influence in a corrupt and greedy world, the power of the Churches.

For the Church of England in the eighteenth century is a sorry spectacle. The days of the great churchmen had passed. Where, in the seventeenth century, there had been a plethora of learned and energetic divines, in the eighteenth there forms a consecrated void in which echo the snores of somnolent ecclesiastics. In the hierarchy of the Church we look for one outstanding figure. Save Berkeley, and he was an Irish bishop, there is none. The education of the lesser orders was often negligible; their theology weak; their morality sometimes dubious. The Church was no longer a calling; it had become a career, in which the sons of gentlemen might close a youth of profligacy and range themselves by turning to holy orders and devoting the rest of their lives to farming, hunting and drinking. Indeed one might say, it had become almost a commercial industry. Livings lapsed into the hands of chapters, which with considerable ingenuity took the revenues, and placed the parishioners in charge of a £50 a year curate. Pluralism was rife. It was quite possible for one incumbent to annex four, five or six benefices, and by energetic measures and the abbreviation of the rites carry out some parade of his duties on occasional fine Sundays. The Church had in fact grown utterly despiritualized. It had become the appanage of the political party in power, which saw to it that the Bench held only bishops of the right party complexion, and left their capacity for divinity to their nominees' own consciences. Those consciences were tolerably comfortable. The Church of England was not a bad institution, thought

these bland gentlemen: in certain sees, the emoluments of the bishop were rather better than those of the Lord Chancellor; and the office gave the holder admirable opportunities for furthering the ambitions of younger sons and nephews. Doctrine was, after all, a matter for the legislature. "In subscribing the thirty-nine articles the intention of the authority which prescribes subscription is to be satisfied. The authority is not the Legislature of the 13th Eliz., which passed the Act imposing subscription, but the existing Legislature of this country which, having the power of repealing that Act, and forbearing to exercise it, ratifies and, as it were, re-enacts the law. The point, therefore, which the candidate for Orders has to decide is the nature of the subscription which will satisfy the intention of the Legislature existing at the time." (4) An ecclesiastical institution, whose doctrine rests upon the sanction of the legislature and which has been deprived of any power to criticize or to interfere in the material activities of the nation might well lapse into its slumber.

As for the Nonconformists, their attitude was parallel to that of the older institution. Although the Test and Corporation Acts still ran, they were almost a dead letter. By occasional conformity, that is by taking the Sacrament according to the Anglican ritual once a year, dissenters became for purposes of office-holding nominal members of the Church of England. In spite of the protests of the Church, toleration—or, should one say, Laodiceanism?—had gained the day. Released from the necessity of fighting its way in a world of persecution and oppression, the 'Three Denominations' fell back on the interminable quarrels of doctrinal experts. To the mundane activities of their congregations, they displayed an indifference equal

to that of the members of the Established Church, or, perhaps even greater, were that possible. For the nonconformist minister was burdened with the unenviable task of keeping on good terms with his congregation, by whom he might at any time be denounced and ejected for any sin from levity of demeanour to a disbelief in Predestination: or, if he had the ear of the majority, observe the secession of the minority, and the disappearance of an equivalent part of his stipend. In such a position, it was impossible for a nonconformist minister to play the rôle of a Latimer. What would be the fate of one who rebuked the elders of the congregation because they sweated or underpaid their workmen? How could he remind his backers of their duty towards society? He well knew that he would be cast out. Condemned to spiritual slavery to his congregation, though frequently their superior in every branch of education, ill paid, the hired servant of a parsimonious group of shopkeepers and their like, what chance had he? It is no wonder that the thunders of ancient Independency were silent. Justification by faith and not by works had produced fatty degeneration of the soul.

In such an atmosphere, the clang of twenty thousand artisan voices hoarsely shouting the hymns of Methodism echoed like the trump of doom. The Bishops woke, and guessing the menace of another 1645, shook. Discerning atheism, the Congregationalists and Baptists roused themselves to battle. All suspected treason at least. Jacobinism and Deism were among the charges thrown at the followers of Wesley and Whitefield. Revolution was obviously at the door. But the Churches were wrong. It was a new Puritan revival indeed, which Wesley and Whitefield preached; but it was not that of the seven

teenth century. There was nothing of the political revolutionary in the revivalists. The gospel they preached was that of Christian fellowship. So it gradually emerged that, far from being dangerous, the new movement was a positive blessing. Not only was Methodism loyal to the Crown, it supported the established order; and industrialists welcomed a movement which they discovered was an admirable drug to divert the minds of workpeople from the woes of this world by offering visions of the next.

It would be improper to speak of the Methodists without stressing the great services which they, and their successors, the Evangelicals, rendered to humanity. To them and to their followers is due the long series of palliative measures upon the industrial system, which came to life during the nineteenth century, the abolition of the slave trade, the Factory Acts, the Print Works Act, the Ten Hours Bill, the whole line of social reform of which Shaftesbury is the protagonist.

Yet at the same time, Puritanism in decay took a new life from this freshet. Methodism revived in a modified degree the more odious practices of Calvin's system as applied to the citizens of Geneva. Perhaps this is best illustrated by a passage from Wesley's famous tract in defence of his system.

" I was talking," he wrote, " with several of the Society in Bristol concerning the means of paying the debts there; when one stood up and said ' Let every member of the Society give a Penny a Week till all are paid.' Another answered, ' But many of these are poor and cannot afford to do it.' ' Then,' said he, ' put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give anything, well. I will call on them weekly, and, if they can give

nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you, call on eleven of your neighbours weekly; receive what they give and make up what is wanting.' It was done. In a while, some of those informed me, 'They found such and such a one did not live as he ought.' It struck me immediately 'This is the thing; the very thing we have wanted so long.' I called together all the leaders of the Classes (so we used to term them and their companions), and desired that each would make a particular enquiry into the behaviour of those he saw weekly. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected. Some turned from the evil of their ways. Some were put away from us. Many saw it with fear and rejoiced unto God with reverence." (5)

Wesley in his honest enthusiasm saw only the benefits of his system of inquisition. "It can scarcely be conceived," he said, "what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation;" and pooh-poohed the objections of those who disliked it, who viewed it "in a wrong point of light, not as a *privilege*, but rather a *restraint*." But the thing he feared most, "narrowness of spirit . . . straitened in our bowels," fell upon his successors. The habit of prying into one's neighbour's affairs is as old as Sarah: but it is not until the Wesleyan revival that it ever received approval and sanctification in England. The highly unpleasant habit of prying into the private lives of those unable to protect themselves, so characteristic of the nineteenth century, is due to the inquisitorial and impertinent system inaugurated by Wesley, and adopted by the Evangelicals. It is not by such methods that the moral reformation of nations is undertaken.

The second revival did not possess that homogeneous

element which had been the strength of seventeenth-century Puritanism. It was not a class movement. Spreading among all ranks of society, it spent its strength among the complexities of modern life, and lost itself in the sands of sectarianism. Nevertheless, it did change the mind of the country. Not unaided; for its growth was side by side with a different but more powerful movement in France, the Revolution: and this strange ally helped to bring about the strong Sabbatarian revival and the extraordinary change in public manners which is so marked about the beginning of the nineteenth century. The fear of excesses, similar to those taking place in France, gripped the imagination of the upper classes as no religious revival had been able to do. France, it was certain, had brought it on herself by the unbounded licence of her literature, which disseminated the seeds of atheism. Voltaire, Rousseau, Beaumarchais were pointed to as the inspirers of the upheaval; their works were publicly burned. Arthur Young deplored the effects of unenclosed common land and divine service only once a month. Nothing, he held, was better calculated to fill the country with barbarians ready for any mischief. "Fields full of workmen," he cried, "and where soon would divine worship be? Do French principles make so slow a progress that you should lend them such helping hands?" (6) Between the Evangelicals and the Jacobins, a wave of Sabbatarianism swept the country. At first employers were hostile, loath to lose a day's work: but under the persuasion that Sabbatarianism was the medicine to keep labourers quiet, dutiful and obedient, they recanted.

Like all enthusiasts, the Evangelicals did not perceive that people can have too much of a good thing. They failed to grasp that the enforcement of Sunday worship

was as destructive to the spirit as the lack of opportunity which they had deplored, that souls are not saved by imprisonment between church walls. They forgot, if they had ever read, Benjamin Whichcote's aphorism: "It is an imperfection in Religion to drudge in it, and every man drudges in Religion, if he takes it up as a task and carries it as a burden." (7) The dismal English Sunday, notorious among foreigners, became established as part of the coat armour of tranquillity.

The new Puritan revival confirmed the attitude of the middle to the lower classes as surely as, if less ferociously than, the original movement. The Age of Scepticism was blown away, and the Age of Incuriosity established. "The natural tendency of the excesses of the French Revolution," moaned Tom Moore, "was to produce in the highest classes an increased reserve of manners, and, of course, a proportionate restraint on all within their circle, which have been fatal to conviviality and humour, and not very propitious to wit, subduing both manners and conversation to a sort of polished level, to rise above which is often thought as vulgar as to sink below it." (8)

Beneath that polished surface, impervious to every shock save that of war, grew and flourished those dusty aspidistras of respectability and self-complacence, whose tough stems even the wit and humanism of an Arnold could not cut. It was to our great moral qualities, we flattered ourselves, that our strength was due: "for lack of them France may be mischievous, but will never be great."

It is a savage age, powerfully armed with taboos; "the things which are better left alone," "the things which are not to be discussed," "the things which are not to be thought of," the age of Manchester Liberalism,

of *laissez-faire*, and of that notable Puritan, John Bright, who fought factory legislation with a malignance and lack of scruple reminiscent of Pym. It is a period of great humanitarian endeavour, but it is also the period when the great deity, Property, is finally enshrined as the last court of appeal on questions of morality.

Gradually over two centuries, the middle classes have been legislating to crystallize a world according to their plan. They have by every means in their power done their utmost to chain criticism, from the Playhouse Bill of 1738 to the Defence of the Realm Regulations, by the strengthening of the law of libel, by their Erastian policy towards the Church. Only after three centuries, during which the aristocracy has disappeared, and the rabble have been exasperated, has a door been opened into the hothouse in which our moral vanities, like monstrous cacti, have been fattening. A strong, icy wind has been blowing from this quarter and that. Will it kill these growths, or are they now so well acclimatized to our soil that they will continue to breed?

(ii)

The history of the Civil War is the history of the English Reformation. Many things had been contributing to it from the days of Henry VIII. There was for one the desire for simplicity, which overtakes men as a desire for grass seizes a dog, a healthy medicament. There was the propaganda by 'prophesying' of the ministers trained in Geneva. There was the Church of England on the defensive on two fronts, Catholic and ultra-Protestant. There was, perhaps the strongest factor of all, the fear of Spain, and through Spain, the fear of Rome. The terror of Rome was so great that advanced

Protestantism, in order to make its complete severance the more marked, jettisoned every belief, rite and tradition which it could associate with its enemy. Puritanism succeeded partly by its own inherent qualities; but as much because the circumstances of the times gave it congenial soil in which to flourish. It was a middle-class movement, an off-shoot of the continental movement, which, so far as it affected England, was entirely urban and originated among the commercial classes. It arrived at the critical moment of enormous trade expansion, following the Discoveries, after a century and more of internal peace. Had it come at any other time, it might have died away, or, as so frequently happens in England, become absorbed in the life of the country without any upheaval. Arriving at the particular moment when the middle classes were for the first time discovering their strength, it waxed strong with them, supporting and supported by their especial virtues. Their religion was as much part of the life of the early Puritans as the putting on of their boots. The discipline which they exacted in spiritual life was echoed in their mundane existence. Their watchwords were at once liberty and restraint, but the liberty was not for all and the restraint was to be self-imposed. In the social system which they attacked and destroyed there had been a liberty of worship as wide as that required by the Puritans, but with different limits. In this social system there had also been restraint, but it had been State- not self-imposed, on those mundane activities which the Puritans were most concerned to leave unrestrained. Only in its narrowest aspect was the battle joined on the religious issue; in its widest it was social, individualism against State control.

The Tudor and early Stuart government may have

been tyrannous from the point of view of the middle sorts of men. So has been every government which has stood for an ideal of the State as a whole. Under Strafford and Laud, whose activities produced the atmosphere propitious to the explosion, government reached a pitch of authoritarianism which had not been seen for sixty years. But its régime was not selfish. It attempted to look upon the country as a single entity, and to protect the helpless from the strong. It regarded King, Church and People as one indivisible whole, and because it strove to hold them together by a system of checks, by a theory of rights and duties, it earned the hatred of the individualist.

Puritanism did more than break a system. It broke a tradition, and for that we are still paying. The founders of the Church of England insisted above everything else on its traditional aspect, on the apostolic succession. They were well aware that religion is a natural growth, which cannot be forced. The Church of England was, in their eyes, the true child of St Peter's foundation, and they looked to it to carry on the tradition of the Christian religion. Tradition is a necessary element in human progress, whether it be applied to religious or to economic life. As Laud said, it is not a blind alley, but a lane leading to a more open field. Puritanism, like all new brooms, wished to make its sweeping thorough. In his superb self conceit, disdaining the historical guides, the Puritan set forth upon his mighty excursion, trusting alone to his resolution and to his own conception of the Godhead. He climbed no higher than the foothills, where contentedly he sat down, saying, " See what an eminence I have ascended." The Independents, by their defeat of the Presbyterians, destroyed the moral and spiritual hegemony of the Churches over society. They had

correctly diagnosed that the theocracy of Geneva was unsuited to the needs of England: but they failed to see that by the removal of authority, they were lifting the only real restraint to a licence, which, to do them justice, they abhorred with the fervour of Laud.

The effects of their disjection of the traditional Church are to be observed in the next hundred years. Religious toleration came, not through the widening of man's understanding and sympathy, but through indifference and apathy. The reconstructed Church of England was a poor thing. If the flames leapt up and shone during the reigns of Charles II and James II, they were only the last flickers before extinction. Such men as Stillingfleet, Tillotson, Burnet, men trained in Caroline ways to Caroline usages, men trained to an ideal higher than the reach of a generation educated in Puritan individualism, were the last embers of the dying fire. The new fuel could not catch at the old flame. The Church from 1645 onwards was doomed to exist by the sanction of the legislature. Doctrine, as the eighteenth century divines were well aware, was no longer their province; to satisfy the legislature was all that was required of them. No longer even a partner in the State, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Church of England was almost completely divorced from the life of the country. Shaftesbury found it a great matter for self-congratulation when a few bishops supported his campaign for the better regulation of employment in industry. But it is significant that even in our own days an Archbishop of Canterbury feels it injudicious to protest in Parliament against the persecution of co-religionists in Russia, until the Pope has spoken, for fear lest his utterances may be thought to wear a political complexion. What, one wonders, is the

champion of the Vaudois thinking in his elysium? If the speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury on matters so much within his province is to be used for political controversy, what hope is there for the Church of England as a moral guide in matters which touch more closely the material interests of parties? The one institution, trained and by tradition apt to take cognisance of matters of morality in all walks of life, is heaped with contumely if it venture an utterance upon any matter not specifically religious. The grotesque parody of the Council of Nicæa recently enacted over the Book of Common Prayer by the stalwarts of every denomination in the House of Commons is a sufficient warning of the straits to which the Church would be reduced if a Laud or a Latimer were to come again. One has only to watch the attitude of an Anglican priest to-day towards a congregation in the poorer quarters of London to see the weakness of the Church's position when stripped of its authority. The Anglican must, as the phrase is, "jolly them along." There is no vestige of authority on one side, very little of respect to the cloth on the other. The Anglican priests who are working in the vast slum parishes are noble and hard-working men, practical saints. But the respect and affection which they inspire are given to the man and not to the priest. Such is the position to which Erastianism has brought what was the greatest moral, intellectual and educational force of ten centuries.

The Church is not primarily to blame, but Puritanism. By its uprooting of the Church, Puritanism destroyed the whole line of tradition: and tradition is the blood of all institutions, the blood from which the Church of Rome draws its enormous power. Lopped off from its past, the Church of England withered as quickly as a flower cut

from its stalk. And its death spelled the end of any kind of spiritual basis for society.

If the Church withered, so did Puritanism. Its primary virtues, simplicity, industry, honesty, are self-regarding virtues. Unless conditioned by some supernatural power, they will take command as surely as any djinn the luckless investigator has raised without the safeguarding talismans. The step from virtue to vice is but a hand's breadth. Simplicity harshened to narrowness, industry to drudgery, thrift to greed. Honesty by careful casuistry fell to necessity and expediency. The touchstone of godliness was worldly success. The practical demons took charge. Unguided, unsupported in the shifting morasses of commercial life, the Puritan chose the safe way, and learned to praise himself for his good sense. " For my part," says Mr Hold-the-World, " I like that religion best that will stand with the security of God's good blessings unto us: for who can imagine it was ruled by reason, since God has bestowed upon us the good things of this life, but that He would have us keep them for his sake? Abraham and Solomon grew rich in religion." (9) As that admirable Dissenter, Daniel Defoe, was admitting eighty years after Naseby: " Custom has driven us beyond the limit of our morals." (10) From that point it is a simple transition to the utilitarian theory that self-interest is to the benefit of society.

By the elevation of the doctrine of success as evidence of the benevolence of God, Puritanism gave an edge to the already keen appetites of the commercial classes. By the destruction of the Church, it removed the only restraint upon that appetite. In the place of the ancient injunctions against commercial licence, they furbished up a batch of taboos which threw upon the inferiors only duties.

There has always been in the Christian Church a customary sanctity attaching to poverty, derived from the teachings of our Lord. Man's duty towards the poor was through centuries the theme of countless saints, preachers, moralists and economists. But Puritanism, by blessing the acquisitive virtues, placed upon poverty the stigma of failure, the sign of the withdrawal of God's blessing from the unfortunate. It became the right, nay, the positive duty of the elect to cozen and exploit the obvious sinner. "A society," says Professor Tawney, "which reverences the attainment of riches as the supreme felicity will naturally be disposed to regard the poor as damned in the next world, if only to justify itself for making their life a hell in this." (11) The state of war between capital and labour which has been growing through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is the result of the Puritan's forgetfulness of teaching which the discarded Church had iterated through centuries.

In the spiritual pride begotten of the doctrine of work and success, Puritanism has turned its destroying rays upon another aspect of life, the arts. From two points of view, the religious and the practical, it has always possessed a profound distrust of humanism in all its manifold forms. At certain times, its enmity has sunk to the level of barbarian outrage; at others, it has attempted to smother it by a powerful and authorized ignorance. (One recalls a recent British Home Secretary who pleaded that he could not afford to buy books, but one is vouchsafed no vision of him standing in the queue at the Twickenham Public Library to remedy his lack of means.)

From the religious side, there is the suppression of the theatre, which Prynne and his contemporaries held to be utterly immoral. There is the episode of the royal

collections of pictures, which were broken up on the ground that the subjects were either superstitious or lascivious: the former, it was suggested, should be pitched into the Thames; the latter, one gathers, were to be sold for the benefit of the Commonwealth. There is the abolition of music in all churches, and the dispersal of the musicians, whereby English music was destroyed for ever. The decline of lyric poetry, especially love poetry, through the second half of the seventeenth century is patent. Yet, though the Puritans excused their enmity on religious grounds, it was rather from a strong admixture of practical theories that the work was done.

Puritanism is not ascetic in the sense of mediæval asceticism. If it refrained from certain actions, if it abstained from certain things, it did not do so because to abstain was good, but because to touch was evil. As an example, on 7th June, 1650, two bills were tabled in the House of Commons, the first for the suppression of cursing and swearing, the second, "against the Vice of Painting and wearing black Patches, and immodest Dresses of Women." (12) The former was duly read a second time: the latter disappeared into whatever limbo is reserved for unpalatable measures. The seventeenth century Puritan found his asceticism in his toil, not in his abstentions; and it is because of their unpractical and unworldly elements that he directs his hatred against the arts. To him, painting, music, poetry are, if not downright dangerous, at the best pastimes and vanities. In his desire to pen and canalize human energy, he cannot abide anything which may distract from the purpose for which he believes life to exist; the arts are drains down which the vital forces waste themselves. He had little sympathy with a learning or an accomplishment which

could not be turned to some useful end. To him, the idea of unrequited toil, of a fruitless search, was worthless. His own ideal, success, was so much more easily intelligible. The aspirations of the humanist are to him incomprehensible; and even had he grasped them, they would have seemed undesirable. "My Saviour banished joy," wrote George Herbert. The Puritan mistrusted all manifestations of the human spirit and body not directed to the service he worshipped. The spirit of humanism is directed to other ends than the spirit of Puritanism. Its growth is with the human spirit, and it believes in the will to virtue of humanity, in which the Puritan has no trust. It draws strength for its further advances from tradition. "I hate traditions," says Ananias in *The Alchemist*; "I do not trust 'em." In the days of Elizabeth, any manifestation of the human mind was a fit prey for the artist. The Elizabethan was possessed by an awareness of the beating pulse of his own time. Nothing was too big, nothing too gross, nothing too fine for him to fix his curiosity upon. The Puritan, by attempting to force upon England a restraint upon the imagination, bent and injured, if he could not kill, that vital spirit: he thinned its blood and weakened its vigour. After the Civil War, the artist becomes less capacious. His mind hovers over one object of which it becomes the master. He may deal in manners or metaphysics, never in both.

Similarly, it becomes the duty of writers and artists to fulfil great moral purposes. Now, there is scarcely a great poem in English, or, for that matter, in any language, which the author did not think would be an inspiration to his readers: but that is a private communication from the writer to the reader. To hedge a writer round with moral purposes is to baulk him at the beginning. More-

over, by constant reiteration of the virtuous purpose of the arts, the phrase loses its vitality. Like the banner of liberty, that of moral purposes has been taken out into the rain once too often; its colours have run, and, now when it is hoisted, people begin to suspect that it is in reality quite another flag. " ' It's an 'oax, Mr Gumbril. An 'orrible plant. And if I may be allowed to say so,' Mr Bojanus lowered his voice, but still spoke with emphasis, ' a bloody swindle.' "

Not even the most fervent apostle of bygone days wants the age of Elizabeth back again, in spite of all its barbarous and energetic splendour. But one knows that there was in the days of the Tudors some conception of the country as a complete entity, and not a chaotic mass of individuals or classes associated by the whims of the earth's formation, anxious, greedy and mistrustful. Puritanism gave us political liberty; but one is sometimes doubtful whether it was worth it. The cause was too good to be fought for. We are as much enslaved as ever. Political liberty has not freed us from the wilfulness of man. We have merely changed our gaolers.

> " Fair Liberty, Britannia's goddess, rears
> Her cheerful head . . ."

and sees what a mess she has made of it with anarchic industry and class warfare. The greed and rapacity of the powerful existed long before the coming of Puritanism: but it was left to the Puritans to call them blessed. In return for the virtues of Puritanism, we have lost our most precious gifts. Even our language has suffered, so deeply have the practical virtues bitten into us. " If our linguistic test has any virtue," says Mr Logan Pearsall Smith, " we must conclude that the English are an

essentially practical race. The conscious desire for ideal and perfect things has not inspired them, nor have they provided humanity with its religions, its dreams, its remote aspirations." (13) The exchange of the oligarchy of trade for an absolute King and an authoritative Church may have increased our possessions; it has certainly impoverished our souls. Wherever the commercial and utilitarian standard is set, something of that nation's life vanishes. In every country, where there has come to the people the single concentration upon the acquisition of wealth, there has inevitably followed the destruction of some part of what makes for happiness. It is seen in eighteenth century England. It is reflected in Germany with the foundation of the Empire and the apotheosis of Bismarck and *realpolitik*. It is being repeated to-day in Southern Italy, once the land of song as England was four centuries back, and where now no voice is raised. It is repeated in Russia, that fantastic Kakotopia of materialism. It aridifies the human spirit in every nation where willing and unquestioning homage to " the bitch goddess, success " is encouraged. The Puritan, the Junker, the Fascist and the Bolshevik have each made a virtue of efficiency and gone no further. They have conjured up a Robot state and would like to make a Robot world.

Efficiency is a virtue; restraint is a virtue; industry is a virtue: but the excess of virtues is as dangerous as the excess of vices. They gave to Puritanism its spiritual arrogance, the most evil of monstrous tumours. As the Cavalier general told Fairfax: " In our army, we have the sins of men (drinking and wenching); but in yours, you have those of devils, spiritual pride and rebellion." (14)

Puritanism has eaten deeply into the spirit of England,

so deeply, perhaps, that there is no remedy for its vitriolic burns. But to-day we are less patient of individualism, having experienced its selfishness and anarchy. Even in small ways, town-planning, countryside preservation, and a hundred other schemes, we are trying to drag ourselves back from the slough into which the stupidity of individual egotism has cast us. We believe more in co-operation, and less, if at all, in liberty. For, after all, there can be no liberty in the world until the decency of life is assured to all men, and no liberty until man has educated himself to be worthy of it. The way back to civilization is long: but it may be achieved. "And as we give free play to all in our public life, so we carry the same spirit into our daily relations with one another. We have no black looks or angry words for our neighbour, if he enjoys himself in his own way, and we abstain from the little acts of churlishness which, though they leave no mark, yet cause annoyance to whoso notes them. . . . We are lovers of beauty without extravagance, and lovers of wisdom without unmanliness." (15)

That Athenian ideal cannot be reached until there is some other injunction than Mrs Gooch's Golden Rule, some other test of virtue than material success. Perhaps the reinstitution of a spiritual authority is required. But that cannot be so long as spiritual authority rests on the will of an assembly which can be depended on to stampede at a shout of "No Popery." Until its Erastian gag is removed, the Church will maintain its three hundred years' silence. The burden of its teaching has been taken up by other voices. Economists and humanists warn us in words, which, divested of their modernism, are as old as the Sermon on the Mount, that efficiency, thrift, industry, discipline are worthless unless inspired by some

other end than their own excellence. Only thus can we regain some measure of the inheritance of sweetness and light, which were ours before Puritanism, in the arrogance of godliness and in its self-complacence, deprived us of them. "There never was a merry World since the *Fairies* left dancing and the Parson left conjuring."

THE END

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